



AN
ENQUIRY
INTO THE
CAUSES &c.
IN TWO PARTS.



[Price Three Shillings.]

AN

ENQUIRY

INTO THE

CAUSES

OF THE

PRELIMINARY PRICES

AN

ENQUIRY

INTO THE

TWO PARTS



C. A. U. S. A.

IN TWO PARTS

THE

LONDON

PRINTED BY

AN
E N Q U I R Y
INTO THE
C A U S E S
OF THE
PRESENT HIGH PRICE
OF
P R O V I S I O N S.

IN TWO PARTS:

- I. Of the GENERAL CAUSES of this EVIL.
II. Of the CAUSES of it in some particular
INSTANCES.

Non la mesure des choses, mais la mesure de ma vûe.
MONTAIGNE.

L O N D O N :

Printed for J. FLETCHER and Co. in St. Paul's Church-Yard;
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ADVERTISEMENT.

NOTHING but the author's real
sense of the inadequate manner
in which he has treated a subject of so
much importance, could prompt the
repugnance he feels to read about
himself. He has only to say that he
tells his apology upon the extensive and
complicated nature of the subject, and
upon the necessity he found himself en-
deavouring to express in some haste a design
which came late into his thoughts. To
one merit only he lays full claim, that
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NOTHING but the author's real sense of the inadequate manner, in which he has treated a subject of so much importance, could overcome the repugnance he feels to say a word about himself. He has only to say, that he rests his apology upon the extensive and complicated nature of the subject, and upon the necessity he found himself under of executing in some haste a design, which came late into his thoughts. To one merit only he lays full claim, that of having written with the most steady impartiality.

INTRODUCTION.

THE present high price of provisions and other necessities of life is a calamity of general and alarming nature that every attempt to find out its cause or to point out a remedy for it is at least excusable. It will easily be allowed that it is not in all its extent owing to any single cause, that there are many circumstances which actually concur in producing this effect, and also that many others are inclined to do so which have not yet reached the point of the crisis of this evil being deep and is likely to be long and gradual progression of it. The effect of the cause can only be remedied by doing things as much as possible in a different train. Causes on the contrary are of a temporary and contingent nature, and the only way to prevent them may be palliated at least if not remedied by expedients of a like kind. It will be necessary therefore to examine these separately, first those causes whose operation is general and uniform, and secondly those of a more limited nature which effect only particular effects, and at particular conjunctures.

INTRODUCTION.

THE present high price of provisions and other necessities of life is a calamity of so general and alarming a nature, that every attempt to find out its cause, or to point out a remedy for it, is at least excusable. It will easily be allowed, that it is not in all its extent owing to any single cause; that there are many circumstances which actually concur in producing this effect; and also that many others are alledged to do so, which have not in fact such tendency. Some of the causes of this evil lie deep, and arise from a long and gradual progression of things. The effects of these can only be remedied, by putting things as much as possible in a different train. Others on the contrary are of a temporary and contingent nature; and the evils arising from them may be palliated at least, if not redressed, by expedients of a like kind. It will be necessary therefore to examine these separately: to consider, first, those causes whose operation is general and uniform; and, secondly, those of a more limited nature, which affect only particular articles, and at particular conjunctures.

viii INTRODUCTION.

tures. By such a full and accurate examination we shall be alone able to distinguish the real sources of this evil from the pretended ones; from those which owe their rise to false and imperfect views, or, which is too often the case, to particular interests. A point this of the utmost consequence. There may be greater danger in pursuing a false scent, than in not pursuing the true one. And in the course of this enquiry I shall be guided as much as possible by general principles; such as arise from the very nature of political and commercial society; and whose operation is sure and inevitable, when sufficient time is allowed for such operation. It is indeed upon such general principles only that any measures of solid and permanent utility can be founded.

CON

C O N T E N T S.

P A R T I.

O F R I C H E S.

O F L U X U R Y.

O F T A X E S.

P A R T II.

O F C O R N.

O F E X P O R T A T I O N A N D I M P O R T A T I O N.

O F E N G R O S S I N G.

O F I N C L O S U R E S.

O F B R E A D.

O F C A T T L E.

O F H O R S E S.

ERRATA.

Pag. Line

- 11 11 from the top, read useful *and* innocent.
- 12 9 from the top, for *the* keeping, read *that of* keeping.
- 14 10 from the bottom, for exchange *of*, read exchange *for*.
- 30 2 from the bottom, for *trouv * read *trouv *.
- 99 24 from the top, read grown *at a*.
- 146 10 from the bottom, for *lefts* read *left*.

AN
ENQUIRY &c.

PART I.
OF THE
GENERAL CAUSES
OF THE
High Price of PROVISIONS.

Le bien politique, comme le bien morale, se trouve
toujours entre deux limites.

MONTESQUIEU.

AN
ENQUIRY
&c.

PART I
OF THE
GENERAL CAUSES
OF THE
High Price of Provisions.

In this Enquiry, attempt is here made to shew
that the high Price of Provisions
is not owing to any one Cause
Montgomery

A N
E N Q U I R Y, &c.

P A R T I.

OF R I C H E S¹.

THE first general cause of the high price of provisions and other necessaries of life in this country is the wealth of it; or the great quantity of money accumulated in it, and circulating through every part of it. The fact, I suppose, is indisputable; that the quantity of circulating money (whether in specie or paper makes not the least difference) is prodigiously increased within a few years, and particularly since the late war. The necessary consequence of which increase is an advance in some proportion upon commodities of all kinds,

¹ I use the terms, riches, wealth, money, generally in the same sense throughout this chapter; as money is the universal measure of riches. Whenever the words riches, wealth, or the like, are used in a different sense, I hope the context will determine it.

and indeed upon every thing transferable. It is demonstrable, if not self-evident, that this must be the case, if the quantity of commodities brought to market continue the same. For supposing amongst any number of people the transfers of all kinds to be equal, the prices will be always in proportion to the quantity of money actually employed in such transfers. It would therefore be to the last degree ridiculous to expect, that the price of provisions at this time should bear any proportion to the prices in Queen Elizabeth's reign, or to the present prices in some other countries. In which instances the apparent cheapness does not arise from the greater plenty of provisions, but from the greater scarcity of money representing them. If therefore this increase of money was equally diffused throughout the community, it is evident at first sight, that the high prices of commodities in consequence of it would not in this single view prejudice any particular members. For money being representation merely, and a conventional contrivance for the easier exchange of goods, it is certain, that the greater or lesser quantity of it cannot in this way have the least effect. Supposing, for instance, in any period of time, the circulating money be double what it is in another period; be double upon the whole, and double in the hands of each individual; and supposing the labour, produce, merchandise, and every

every thing else which is exchanged or brought to market to be the same: what will be the consequence? the absolute and nominal prices will be doubled; but the relative and real ones will be the same. As a buyer I shall pay double, and as a seller I shall receive in the same proportion. This, I say, would be undoubtedly the case upon any additional influx of wealth into a kingdom, supposing such riches were equally distributed throughout the several parts of it. But this never is, nor ever can be the case. Such additional wealth is generally imported by a few hands: few, I mean, in comparison to the whole body of the people. It is a considerable time before it can be moulded in any degree into the general mass, so as to replace individuals in the same relative condition of riches, as they were in before such an event. But the great misfortune is, that the gradual progress of things toward this state of equality is necessarily accompanied by a perpetually growing evil, no less fatal to the interests of the society than that very inequality which yet it tends to remove¹. The advanced

¹ The attentive reader will easily distinguish between an inequality of fortunes, and the unequal distribution of money at its first entrance into a kingdom. The everlasting tendency of an unequal distribution of fortunes is to a still greater inequality. But the tendency of money as a representation is just the reverse. It will be constantly more and more mixing itself with the several exchanges of commodities,

vanced price of labour is evidently a part of this progression, and necessarily follows the advanced price of provisions. It can alone compensate such advanced price to the bulk of the community; and reduce things to the state of equality above-mentioned. The consequences of this are obvious, and have been often drawn out. The manufacturer is underfold, trade languishes, and the poor lose their employment. Circumstances which may be regarded as the sure forerunners of universal want, beggary, and wretchedness. It is then perhaps matter of some doubt, how far a great increase of wealth is advantageous to a state in all its consequences. It most certainly is not, as has been commonly supposed, a good without any alloy of evil. In order to prepare our way for a more full determination upon these points, let us consider a little in what manner and by what channels wealth or money is conveyed into a country, in which there are no mines of the precious metals.

ties, and every thing brought to market. And when this is thoroughly done, things will be necessarily reduced to an equality with respect to money their sign. No one will in this single view be a sufferer after such a period, excepting those who have nothing, not even labour, to bring to market, or, which comes to the same, nothing but what bears an unalterable price. In other words, none will suffer, except such as live entirely upon salaries, pensions, or any fixed sums of money.

The first, and most natural, and most advantageous channel of riches into any kingdom, is by the export and sale of its produce and manufactures¹. This is a species of commerce, which all wise nations have encouraged to the utmost; and have left without a check at least in almost all its branches. And in general it cannot be too much encouraged. As the wealth imported into a kingdom in exchange of these commodities is the price of industry and labour, of art and invention, it must tend to increase and quicken such art and industry; circumstances which can alone render a state prosperous and happy within itself, or give it security and power with respect to its neighbours. It is evident however, that every kind of produce and manufacture does not in this view deserve equal encouragement. There is an extreme here, as in most other cases. And there may be circumstances in which such encouragement may not only be productive of greater evil than good, but may be ruinous and fatal. There are two circumstances which ap-

¹ I distinguish between produce and manufacture, as they generally are distinguished, and constitute the two divisions of the landed and trading interests, though they always in some degree or other go together. There is no produce without some manufacture, and seldom a manufacture without some consumption of home produce, either in the materials or the tools. The more these are blended and mixed, clearly the better.

pear to me to determine the degree of encouragement that ought to be given to any kind of produce or manufacture.

First, as such produce or manufacture is more or less necessary to common subsistence : necessary, I mean, either to the subsistence of individuals, or of the state in general.

And secondly, as the quantity of labour employed in them is greater or less.

The former will be readily admitted in the gross, though it is not always attended to in particular instances. Articles of luxury are of no consideration in comparison to the necessities of life. Nothing but a plenty of these can make the people tolerably happy, or at all increase their numbers. A nation therefore cannot more fatally mistake its own interest, than in giving the least encouragement to luxurious productions, when they are in any degree inconsistent with such as are necessary to general subsistence. And indeed it will be found in many cases highly expedient to give a check to the former articles ; whatever profit they may bring to particular persons, and whatever balance the foreign sale of them may occasion in favour of the nation in general. In respect to mere produce, there occur to me but few instances, in which luxury can in a country like ours be consulted to any considerable degree, in preference to general utility. Neither the climate nor the soil of England is capable

ble of producing the rich wines, and delicious fruits of the southern latitudes. Our attempts therefore in this way are not, I think, considerable enough to merit attention. Especially as improvements in gardening not unfrequently lead to improvements in agriculture. There seems indeed to be some danger lest our pleasure-ground should stretch to rather too great an extent, and too many of our acres be turned into unprofitable lawn, or sunk in still more unprofitable water. But there is one produce of luxury which is carried to the most extravagant height amongst us, that of horses. I mean not to say, that horses are an article of mere luxury. But they may be made so, and at present are made so to a very great degree. The breed of horses in England is at present prodigious. Occasioned clearly by the vast consumption of these animals at home, together with the foreign exportation of them: circumstances which without a check will always keep up their price, so as to be a sufficient temptation even to increase the breed of them. What number is sent abroad I pretend not to conjecture; but I am informed, it is very considerable. So numerous a breed of horses is at first view prejudicial to the breed of cattle; a produce of the most general utility, and indeed of indispensable necessity to life. It ought therefore upon our principles to be checked. And in fact the diminution of the breed of cattle is at present

matter of great complaint, and one evident source of the evil we are considering. These circumstances will be more fully insisted upon hereafter, and are only mentioned here as an example of the general principle I would lay down.

In respect to manufactures, and what are called trades, the same principle holds good. The smith, the carpenter, the mason, the weaver and spinner are infinitely more useful members of society, than the engraver, the carver, the painter, and even the coachmaker. And were the woollen and silk manufactures in any degree inconsistent, would there be a moment's doubt which should give way to the other? Nay, were it possible to remove all the inhabitants of Spitalfields to the north or west of England, and was there sufficient employment for them in the woollen, linnen, or any other manufacture of a less luxurious nature, the benefit to the community would be considerable. I mean not to hint the least shadow of prejudice to this manufacture, as it is now an established one in England, and ought therefore to find every encouragement in preference to foreign articles of the same kind. But still I think; if that manufacture had never gained footing in this country, and especially in the capital, we should not have been at all the worse for it.

it'. Let us buy our silks from Italy, and even from France, our wines from Portugal, or even from Burgundy, let us ransack the continent for pictures, or tooth-picks, and for every other real or fancied ornament of life, nay let us be so inconceivably whimsical as to send both to the East and West-Indies for our common breakfast ; with all my heart. Provided we take care to work up well at home, our wool, our hemp and flax, our oak, our iron, and above all our precious dirty terra firma. There will then be no fear of us. We shall have plenty of people, because we shall have plenty of food and clothes for them ; and shall also have enough of both to spare to those of our neighbours who are in want of them.

The other general circumstance which ought to determine a state in favour of any particular produce or manufacture, is the quantity of labour employed in it. When is a country in the most flourishing and happy condition ? When all its hands are employed, and in consequence of such employment each individual enjoys the necessities of life at least in plenty and security. *Di laboribus omnia vendunt.* Labour is the best ingredient in the cup of human life. It is happi-

¹ The silk manufacture has the other circumstance of general utility in its favour ; the employing a great number of hands,

ness, it is enjoyment in itself¹; and can alone procure the means of it. It gives moreover a relish to every other enjoyment, and prepares men for tasting the sweets of those intervals of rest and repose, which naturally follow it. Nothing indeed can in any degree compensate to a state the want of employment to its people. No advantages of soil, climate, or produce, are a balance against the evils of sloth, idleness, and a state of inaction. They indeed cease to be advantages, the moment they have this effect. Nor can I conceive a greater curse upon a body of people, than to be thrown upon a spot of land, where the productions for subsistence and food were in great measure spontaneous, and the climate required or admitted little care for raiment and covering². Nor are the inhabitants of a country abounding with mines of the precious metals in a more enviable condition. Because here too the means of subsistence are acquired with very little industry or labour. For these

¹ Comparatively at least, if not absolutely so.

² It may be proper to observe that there may be an extreme on the other side. A soil incapable of produce by labour is quite as bad as a soil that produces plentifully without any labour. In this case indeed the country must be in great measure uninhabited, or subsist by commerce. The soil of this country is in general happily of a nature between these extremes. It is capable of great improvement, and when improved to the highest produces in great abundance.

will

will be readily and plentifully supplied by neighbouring nations, who will flock to the exchange of their own commodities for the gold and silver of the other¹. Besides the many evils attached to habits of idleness and indolence, which in these situations must be universal, others will follow on fast even of a worse nature. Whatever be the form of government in such a state, nothing that deserves the name of government can possibly last long. The passions of men being without employment upon objects of an useful innocent nature, will have their full play for dangerous and destructive projects. And in these they will most certainly be employed. The few will soon begin to combine against the many. Avarice, ambition, luxury, and a spirit of rapaciousness will widen more and more the distinction between rich and poor. The nation will soon be divided into these two extremes. A division of all others the most fatal to humanity.

¹ In this case indeed, if the body of the people be small, and the bulk of the hands be employed in the various manufactures of these metals, and especially if they keep the carriage in their own hands, by sending their own goods to foreign markets, and bringing home the commodities of other countries in return, the evil will be proportionably remedied. The manufactured gold and silver will be in that case their staple. But it is not likely they should take this trouble upon themselves, if the metals in their crude state will procure in return, and without any such trouble of the owners, a sufficient quantity, or what they shall think such, of the necessaries of life.

And

And the progress will be rapid and inevitable to that state of society in which every human evil is concentrated; a state of despotism on the one hand, and of slavery on the other. Fact, and the histories of all those countries which have come nearest the above-mentioned circumstances unite in confirming these observations¹. There cannot therefore be a nobler object of government, than the keeping all its hands employed. A spirit of industry is the life and strength, the happiness and true riches of a state; and can alone diffuse and preserve a spirit of liberty through the several parts of it². In this view therefore and in respect to the produce of a country, agriculture in all its branches demands the first attention and encouragement. The number of hands employed in the cultivation of lands is much greater

¹ Spain is in some degree an example of these effects. With the amplest means of subsistence and plenty, and with every natural resource of wealth and power, Spain is become a poor, idle, dispirited, and languishing people. The true cause of this decline must be sought for in the mines of America. That nation, dazzled and infatuated with the false lustre of a fictitious riches, has neglected all its native sources of real prosperity, wealth, and enjoyment.

² The Roman writers are perpetually complaining of the idleness and other mischiefs which arose from the public distribution of corn so much in fashion amongst that people. Thus Tully in *orat. pro Sextio*. *Frumentariam legem C. Gracchus ferebat: jucunda res plebi Romanæ; victus nimis suppeditabatur large sine labore. Repugnabant boni, quod ab industria plebem ad desidiam avocari putabant.*

than

than in pasturage of any kind ; and the produce from tillage, except in some very particular instances, vastly more considerable. I just mention these circumstances at present. They will hereafter be more fully insisted upon.

With respect to manufactures the same reasoning holds good. The great object here is the quantity of labour necessary to the perfection of the work. The profits to the principal manufacturer and merchant are comparatively no consideration. Neither is the balance in favour of the nation. Too large profits in trade, and a large balance are indeed clearly pernicious. Tho' I am sensible, it is in these lights that trade and manufactures are generally considered as most advantageous. But it is to me clear as demonstration, that an enormous balance is in itself a real evil. And unless it be compensated by a great demand of labour, and a proportionable increase of real plenty, is an evil without any good¹. The only kind of exchange that deserves

¹ It may be asked perhaps, why is the balance of trade made so much a national object ? I answer in one word, that the balance of any particular trade is not, or rather ought not to be, an object to the nation, except in this single view ; as it is thereby enabled to carry on a commerce of real and essential utility, where the balance is necessarily against it. Thus suppose a nation in want of some of the real necessities of life, or of some commodities necessary to its own manufactures, such for example's sake as iron, timber,

serves the name of commerce is that of goods for goods. Such a commerce is invaluable in a state, and includes in it every resource of prosperity and real strength; a great consumption of labour, an abundance of every thing necessary to life, both of native and foreign growth, and in consequence a perpetual increase of people. I assert then without hesitation as an undoubted principle, that those manufactures are of the greatest public utility, which on the one side employ the greatest number of hands, and on the other produce the lowest profits to the merchant, and principal manufacturer, and import the lowest balance into the kingdom. A manufacture in which immense riches are acquired tends in various ways to its own ruin. It is a sort of wanton increase of money in the state, and will therefore be attended with the necessary bad consequences of such an increase, first the high price of provisions and other necessaries, then of la-

bour, wool, &c. and suppose again it cannot get a sufficient quantity of these in immediate exchange of its own staple goods, it is evident that there must be a balance of trade from some other quarter, in order to enable it to carry on this last species of commerce. A balance of trade then is only useful as it enables us to extend our trade. The real utility of any branch of commerce, considered alone and without respect to any other branch, arises not from any balance in its favour, but from the greater plenty it occasions of every thing necessary and useful in life, and the more individuals it enables to partake of such plenty.

bour

bour and wages ; which must be followed by the gradual decay of the manufacture itself¹. Nay, I would go still farther ; and would venture to assert, that a manufacture which employs a great number of hands, though the materials are of foreign produce, especially if it be among the necessaries of life, I mean the life not only of individuals, but also of the community, is of infinitely greater public utility, and deserves public encouragement, much more than a manufacture, the materials of which, though of native growth, require a smaller quantity of labour in the working up. The carriage in this instance, while we keep it in our own hands, is a circumstance of considerable benefit ; as it creates additional employment, additional earnings, and in consequence supplies a greater number of persons with the means of subsistence. Though there-

¹ I am never surprized to hear of the decay of any manufactures in this kingdom. I am rather surprized that they exist at all under so many circumstances of disadvantage. The French give forty per cent. more for our wool than our manufacturers ; and are yet able to undersell them. Owing entirely to the cheapness of labour in France. And yet I believe no mortal will say that the labourer's wages in this manufacture are at present too high in England, compared with the price of provisions and all the necessaries of life. What then is to be done in this case ? If we cannot beat them fairly, our only resource is to disarm them. Let them have none of your wool. This, I fear, is not at present effectually done. Wool there is too much reason to suspect, is smuggled into France in considerable quantities. Cannot this possibly be prevented ?

fore

fore we are obliged to fetch great part of our hemp, and timber, and iron, and even wool from foreign countries, I confess I am in no pain about the consequences. While we can by these means employ our hands, and are able to send our manufactures to market whether at home or abroad, there is no fear but we shall be in every view gainers. The great danger is, that in point of riches we shall be too great gainers. Nor am I at all more alarmed at the general complaint of a decay of timber in this kingdom, as long as we can be supplied with materials for shipping and building from the forests of the north, and what would still be better from our American colonies. By clearing away so many of our woods larger room has been given to agriculture; the produce of corn, &c. has been proportionably increased; a vastly greater number of hands employed and consequently maintained. Not to mention the circumstances of health, convenience, and beauty, all of more or less consequence to the inhabitants of any country. It is possible perhaps that there may be an extreme here as in most other cases. Some woods and plantations are absolutely necessary for common use. There are also in this island many pieces of land incapable of any other produce; and which ought therefore without any kind of doubt to be applied to that use. And every where plantations properly disposed add considerable

derable beauty to a country, and very little obstruct its fertility.

We may now then lay it down as an established principle, that the employment of the people, and the plentiful support of them, ought to be the great and leading objects of all arrangements and measures, both with respect to the produce and manufactures of a country. But nothing is more common, as I have already hinted, than to confound this principal object with some concomitant circumstances, and even to pursue measures in favour of the latter, to the manifest prejudice of the former¹. There cannot however be a more fatal mistake. Increase of wealth to merchants and principal traders, together with an additional influx of money into the kingdom, will be in a greater or lesser degree the necessary attendants upon extended manufactures, and a flourishing trade. But though these are in some measure the unavoidable effects of commerce, and the prospect of private gain will alone engage individuals in the pursuit of it, yet ought they never to be the principal or final objects of

¹ Such instances of false policy are most likely to happen, when the lead is too much in the hands of merchants. These gentlemen, though sufficiently clear-sighted in their own particular profession, do not always see things in their general principles, and moreover are not privileged with an exemption from prejudice in favour of that particular branch of commerce in which they are engaged.

public commercial laws or establishments. And indeed they ought always if possible to be checked beyond a certain degree, and in favour of other branches of trade, attended perhaps with lower profits and a smaller balance, but of more real and public utility. The passions of mankind are the grand resources of legislation. Without application to them laws are a mere nothing. And the great art of legislation consists in managing these principles, and drawing them to its own views ; by encouraging them to a certain degree, checking their excess, and playing them one against another in various ways. Thus are individuals happily made to contribute to the good of the public, without any such intention of their own, and sometimes even in spite of a contrary intention. The legislator here copies nature. And legislation would be perfect, could it exactly copy its great original¹. But legislators are men. The grand resource of commercial legislation is

¹ Many instances of this divine contrivance will at once occur to the philosophic reader. Men are in most respects instruments merely in the hands of nature. In the most common, as well as the most important actions of life, we are made to contribute to her designs, without the least intention of that kind on our parts. What are all our appetites, passions, instincts, but so many baits as it were and lures, which nature has thrown in our way to draw us to her own purposes, and to the accomplishment of her infinitely great and benevolent designs ? This distinction has not been sufficiently attended to in moral enquiry, even by the best writers upon these subjects.

the

the passion of avarice. This is the master spring of the whole machine. If that be not touched, and set a going, not a single wheel will stir. But it requires a masterly hand to conduct its operation. For if it be allowed its full play, without obstruction or check, the motion will soon become too rapid, the more delicate parts of the machine be put out of order, and the whole be gradually hastening to dissolution. But to quit metaphor. There must be profits in trade; otherwise there would be no sufficient temptation to it. No one would embark in it. Public interest is in this view a mere chimera. And were a branch of trade to offer itself, the most advantageous in its consequences to the public, but barren of profit to the private adventurer, there would be little doubt of its fate. A spirit of disinterestedness is not to be expected in common life. But public spirit is always expected, and ought always to be found in acts of legislation and government. It is then the province of government to make the most beneficial use of this spirit of interestedness inherent in human nature, and to manage it to its own purposes of general good. To throw out baits or checks in its way, as such purposes may require; and in general to conceal its own intention, and even interposition, in order the more surely to attain its end: & de conduire l'état si paisiblement, qu'il semble n'avoir pas besoin de conducteurs;

as Rousseau expresses it on a similar occasion. This native selfishness of mankind must indeed be narrowly watched. Avarice is of all human passions the most exorbitant and encroaching. It is not in nature to satisfy it. *Assez n'est jamais assez* ¹. It is the only passion that gains increase of appetite by what it feeds on. It is therefore of the utmost consequence to the interests of society that this passion be kept at a moderate diet. Exorbitant profits upon trade must be checked, or they will soon run away with all profit to the public; and an helping hand should be lent to other branches, which stand in need of assistance. For surely it often happens, that a branch of trade is by no means advantageous to the public in the same proportion in which it is profitable to the private adventurer. These two circumstances are rather in an inverse ratio to each other.

The sum of what has been said is this. That the employment of the people and their plentiful enjoyment of the necessaries of life are the great objects which the public eye ought to have in view, in respect to the encouragement and exportation both of its produce and manufactures ².

That

¹ De l'Esprit. Disc. 3. ch. 10.

² It may perhaps be thought, that this reasoning with respect to the quantity of labour employed in produce and manufactures proves too much; that it proves against the general utility of machines, and all kinds of improvements
and

That no particular interest ought to be attended to when in competition with these capital objects; neither the landed interest, which arises from the produce, nor the trading interest, which arises from the manufactures of a country. That the temporary riches acquired by one or both these particular interests, when acting at all in opposition to these views of more general importance, are the real poverty of the people; and will end, unless checked in time by favourable accidents, or the interposition of the legislature, in the common ruin of all. There is, no doubt, a certain point in which these three interests coincide; a certain situation of things, more favourable to them all than any other situation; namely, when the farmer and manufacturer has such demand, the one for his produce, and the other

and inventions for lessening the quantity of labour in either of these instances. And in this single view only, I confess, it does prove thus much. Were the hands which are spared by such improvements to remain absolutely idle, and could the commodity be brought to market at a fair price without such diminution of labour, they would be real evils. For want of labour is amongst the worst of evils. On the other hand, the benefits of these inventions are obvious and considerable, and always tend in their consequences to lessen, if not entirely remedy, the evil which they at first occasion. Manufactures are brought to market at a cheaper rate; the manufacture is thereby extended, and more hands employed. The lands produce more plentifully, and at less expence. The consequence is, a greater plenty of provisions, and a lower price of them.

for his goods, as will fairly enable them to find full employment for the working hands, and to give them wages answerable to the prices of the several necessaries of life which they sell to them. Every deviation from this situation of things, though it be perhaps at first favourable to one set of men, will be immediately detrimental to the rest, and in the end even to that one. The guardians of the state will therefore keep a watchful eye upon every such deviation, and endeavour to stop the progress of it as soon as it in any degree makes itself felt¹. And thus much for the first channel by which wealth is brought into a kingdom, and the effect it has upon the real welfare and prosperity of the community.

The second channel by which money finds its way into a kingdom is by carriage. This is of all others the most innocent, if not entirely innocent. The money thus acquired is wholly the price of labour; and is dispersed at once amongst a great number of working hands. In maritime countries, and especially where the

¹ Men embarked in seemingly opposite interests naturally complain of each other; and the more so, when the spirits are raised, and the mind whetted, by action and pursuit. Thus the landed and trading interests are eternally jarring, and jealous of each other's advantages. Though it is evident to demonstration that they must flourish or fall together. The same circumstances exactly suit both; moderate prices of provisions, moderate prices of labour, and plenty both of one and the other.

extent of territory is small, the carriage is an article of the utmost importance. It affords employment and subsistence for individuals, and increases their numbers. And it can alone preserve a stock of seamen for the security and defence of the state. Holland has been always sensible to this advantage, and improved it to the utmost. The Dutch have been styled the carriers of the world. And by an unremitted attention to this branch of trade, which seems indeed to comprehend the whole system of what Montesquieu calls *le commerce d'économie*, have made themselves ample amends for the scantiness of their territories. They are abundantly supplied with all the conveniencies of life, which are not of their own growth, from other countries. Their cities and towns are filled with inhabitants; besides the great numbers always employed in navigation and foreign commerce. Industry and liberty grow up together and flourish there as in a soil native to them; and are mutually supported, as they always will be, and indeed alone can be, by each other. The state is respectable abroad, and, what is of much greater consequence, the people are happy at home. They seem to enjoy every outward circumstance that can contribute to happiness. For I suppose there is no country upon the face of the earth, in which the body of the people are more fully employed, better paid, and in consequence enjoy

the necessaries of life in greater abundance¹. Most of what has been said with respect to Holland is applicable to England. And all that has been said with respect to the external defence of that republic will apply if possible more strongly to this island. Nature has given us the best frontier in the world; and it is our own fault, if we are not impregnable from without. But this is only to be done by means of an extended navigation². The article of carriage therefore, whether of our own goods to foreign countries, or of theirs in return to us, does not seem to admit of any dangerous extreme; and brings with it no evil, but what is abundantly overbalanced by solid and extensive advantages; included chiefly in these two circumstances, the employment

¹ See Sir William Temple's account of the United Provinces.

² The Marquis de Mirabeau does not seem to be thoroughly acquainted with the nature of the British marine militaire, when he represents it as made up entirely by crews of merchant men turned soldiers. The common men indeed are in time of war taken from the merchant-service: as many at least as can be got. And from whence can they be taken better? The sea, by his own confession, is the only school for the sea. And it is certain that this class of men have little chance of being infected with those mercantile principles, so dreadfully fatal, in his opinion, to the true military spirit. Our officers it is well known are all bred in the navy. And I believe no set of men upon earth are in general more averse to trade, or less qualified for it. See *L'ami des hommes*, vol. 2. ch. marine militaire,

of hands in general, and a nursery of seamen in particular.

These two appear to me to be the only channels, by which riches make their way into a country, as the price of labour and industry¹.

Let

¹ The benefit to a nation from fisheries arises either from the article of carriage, the number of hands employed in them, or from the considerable supply which they afford for provision and some other necessary uses. In all these views they cannot be too much encouraged.

Mr. Locke mentions conquest as a means of bringing wealth into a kingdom: and gives a very proper and striking instance of it in the Romans; all whose immense riches were derived from this single source. But I will not disgrace my country with supposing it capable of entertaining any views of profit from the most just conquests, but what arises from a more enlarged and advantageous commerce. Much less will I suppose its governors capable of entertaining a notion, that conquest can convey to them any other right, than the glorious one of increasing the happiness of both countries; never, that of imparting advantages to one, at the expence of the other. Whatever may have been the general practice of conquerors, and whatever appearance of justification may have been given to their savage conduct by the determinations of some writers upon the law of nations, who have founded their weak reasonings upon this subject, more upon the practice of ancient states, and the ever uncertain law of precedents, than upon any just views of society and human nature, this is the unalterable law of humanity; and such has it always appeared to truly enlightened minds. *La conquête est une acquisition; l'esprit d'une acquisition porte avec lui l'esprit de conservation & d'usage, & non pas celui de destruction.—L'objet de la conquête est la conservation; la servitude n'est jamais l'objet de la conquête,*

Let us now see, by what other means the quantity of circulating money may be increased, so as to affect the price of those commodities which it represents.

It often happens that money is spent in a kingdom, which has not been acquired there : by foreigners, whose fortunes lie in another country ; by natives, whose riches have been gained abroad ; by colonists, who flock to the mother country upon many accounts ; to partake of its refinements in luxury, or its improvements in science ; or to support by their presence and influence the interests of their re-

quête. De l'Esprit des Loix, liv. x. ch. 3. The noblest object of conquest is to impart real advantages to the conquered. It is an object too the most thoroughly selfish. For these will be infallibly reflected back again in tenfold proportion to the conquerors. C'est à un conquérant à réparer une partie des maux qu'il a faits. Je définis ainsi le droit de conquête : un droit nécessaire, légitime, & malheureux, qui laisse toujours à payer une dette immense, pour s'acquitter envers la nature humaine. Ibid. ch. 4. See also a clear confutation of Grotius's system in Rousseau's Contract Social. liv. i. ch. 3, & 4.

* Particularly, by governments, agencies, commissary-ships, conquests by private persons, or private trading companies, if any such there be, and tributes in consequence of them. Monstrous fortunes acquired in this way are the bane of a country. And I am inclined to believe, that the great increase of money in this kingdom is owing more to these circumstances than to any vast balance of trade in our favour.

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spective colonies. Wealth flowing into a kingdom by these channels is evidently not the consequence of industry, but may be the cause of it. And as far as it is the cause of industry, it is a real and essential advantage. To a country, which has no other way of bringing gold and silver into its possession, which is without commerce or manufactures, a constant succession of foreign travellers is of considerable consequence. Every fresh supply of money thus brought in and expended gives new life and spirit to the inhabitants of all ranks, rouses them from their habits of indolence by throwing temptations to labour in their way, and by holding out rewards to industry creates and nourishes it. Such is the condition of many of the towns and states in Italy; particularly of Rome, as observed by Mr. Sharpe. But I much question, whether in a country whose hands are fully employed in agriculture, manufactures, and navigation, and who have full vent for their commodities either at home or abroad, the additional introduction of money by a number of foreign residents be not a greater evil than good. In the single light in which we are now considering things it is clearly an evil, as it must necessarily enhance the price of every thing brought to market. And though it may in some respects be the cause of industry, and in this view is a real advantage, it is not in general the cause of industry of the most useful kind;

kind; and this advantage is, I fear, extremely inconsiderable, in comparison to the damage done to the commercial interest, and to the more extended industry of the state, by raising the price of provisions and labour, and putting it out of its power to send its goods to market upon the same terms with its neighbours. The real strength and prosperity of a country depends chiefly upon the number and industry of its inhabitants. These advantages in respect to England can only be derived from an improved agriculture, and a flourishing commerce; inexhaustible sources these of industry, plenty, and populousness. As an Englishman therefore I have no pleasure in seeing a number of East or West-Indian estates spent in this country, and as little pain in hearing, that our nobility and gentry are every day embarking to throw away a few of their loose guineas upon the continent¹. If our colonists would keep at home and attend to the improvement of their lands, and the civilizing

¹ This is perfectly consistent with Dean Swift's complaints, that the nobility and gentry of Ireland spent great part of their estates abroad, and particularly in England. Such a drain of money must be of fatal consequence to a country every branch of whose commerce was in chains; and where there was no temptation either to agriculture or manufacture, because no market for the produce or the merchandise arising from them. I trust this kingdom is at present in a much better condition. Give them but a market for their goods, and every thing else will follow of course.

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and increasing their people¹, they would more effectually consult their own interest, and also be

¹ I gladly seize this and every opportunity of pleading the cause of humanity against the more than savage cruelty exercised towards the slaves in our plantations. A learned Bishop has lately set the inhumanity of the whole system of this commerce in the strongest light. (See the Bishop of Gloucester's sermon before the society for the propagation of the gospel in foreign parts.) But the ears of a planter are, I fear, to be reached by the voice of authority only. And would England set her neighbouring states an example of this kind in favour of human nature, it would be more real glory to her, than all her numerous conquests and triumphs. *De petits esprits, says the great writer I have just quoted, exagèrent trop l'injustice que l'on fait aux Africains. Car si elle étoit telle qu'ils le disent, ne seroit-il pas venu dans la tête des princes d'Europe, qui font entr'eux tant de conventions inutiles, d'en faire une générale en faveur de la miséricorde & de la pitié ? De l'Esprit des Loix, liv. xv. ch. 5.* The barbarity of this practice is indeed equalled only by its false policy, or at least its absolute inutility. For I can never be brought to believe, that nature has so disposed the productions of any country or any climate, that the destruction of her noblest work, the destruction of the human mind, should be necessary to the acquisition and enjoyment of them. But the mind of a slave has really no existence. *Il n'y a point de travail si pénible, says the same excellent man, qu'on ne puisse proportionner à la force de celui qui le fait, pourvu qu'il se soit la raison & non pas l'avarice qui le régle.* The mines of Hungary and Germany, he says, were before christianity worked by slaves or by criminals ; upon a supposition that none besides could be brought to submit to so laborious an employ. But now, from some trifling privileges annexed to this business, and a somewhat larger allowance of profit than what arises from other common labour, it is even become matter of choice.

be better enabled to take off our manufactures. And if our gentlemen will be a little sparing in their purchases of French and other foreign goods, (clandestine imports of prohibited manufactures I would not so much as suspect) we will forgive them the loss of their company at home for some time, as it will, we hope, be amply compensated by those improvements which they have it in their power to make abroad. Nor need we fear, according to some late accounts, any diminution of their amor patriæ, from the comparison of other countries with their own. We hear every day our gentry, and persons who live upon their own fortunes, in the neighbourhood of a considerable manufacture, complaining of the numerous poor which such a manufacture necessarily draws to it. At the same time the manufacturer complains of the exorbitant prices of provisions occasioned by the

choice. And what has been the consequence to the proprietors? Attend, all ye sons of avarice. The produce of the mines of Hungary, now worked by freemen, is greater than that of the mines in Turkey still worked by slaves only; though the latter of these were formerly much richer than the other. *Je ne sçais*, he concludes, *si c'est l'esprit ou le cœur qui me dicte cet article-ci. Il n'y a peut-être pas de climat sur la terre où l'on ne pût engager au travail des hommes libres. Parce que les loix étoient mal faites, on a trouvé des hommes paresseux: parce que ces hommes étoient paresseux on les a mis dans l'esclavage.* Ibid. ch. 8.

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extravagant consumption and luxury of the other. And both have reason for their complaint. But what remedy is there in either case? I know but one. To keep these two sets of people as far asunder as possible. To keep Bath at as great a distance as is possible from Birmingham. Such an advance upon provisions, &c. as would be of little consequence in the former place, would be fatal to the interests of the latter.

The last way I shall mention, by which money is increased in a kingdom is by notes issued from a public bank, or by any other paper passing current as coin. This is indeed properly speaking a creation of money. For such paper is the sign of money, just as money is the sign of merchandise. It is therefore itself in fact the sign of merchandise; and is just so much added to the circulating cash of the kingdom, and that without adding to the real wealth of a single person in it. I suppose the money paid into the bank for which notes are given, to be constantly upon the wing from thence. If it was indeed to be confined there till the return of the notes, it is evident there would be no harm done. The sign only would be changed, for the sake of greater convenience, without any increase of its quantity. And with respect to the funds, the subscribed cash does not remain a moment in the Exchequer, but flies immediately a thousand ways,

ways, as the exigencies of the state, for which it was borrowed, require. Here, if there is any stagnation, it is in the paper. But there are contrivances to keep this sort of commodity in pretty tolerable motion. India bonds are admirable in this way. Stock of all kinds too may be transferred, that is reconverted, in an instant; and is ever ready at hand for a purchase, or any other undertaking. This in great measure excludes the intervention of specie in the larger contracts of all kinds, and sends it in greater quantities into the traffic of common life; where its representing quality is lessened in the same proportion that its real quantity is increased. Mr. Hume has treated this subject of paper-money with such accuracy and clearness*, that I readily excuse myself from saying any more upon it. I will only observe, that when a part of our public loans is supplied by foreigners, there is a double increase of the circulating money: first, by the actual import of so much money, as is subscribed for or bought up by them in the funds; and secondly, by its conversion into paper.

We have now seen then, that the increase of money in a kingdom necessarily raises the price of commodities of every kind, just in proportion as it enters into the exchange of them. We have enquired into the several causes of such increase; and have endeavoured to distinguish those which are of greater, from others of lesser, utility

* See his *Essays upon money, and public credit.*

utility to the public. And it may now perhaps be easily perceived, what are the proper objects of government with respect to this first cause of the evil we are considering; viz. to cherish those kinds of produce, manufacture, and commerce, which employ the greatest number of hands, and tend to throw out the greatest plenty of the necessaries of life; and, in this view, to give every possible encouragement to agriculture, to extensive navigation, and fisheries of all kinds: to check on the contrary all wanton inundation of wealth into the kingdom, whether arising from exorbitant profits in any particular branch of trade, or from any other cause that does not bring with it utility sufficient to balance the certain evil which attends it: and particularly to confine, if possible, within some limits that delusive species of artificial money, the representation merely of a representation, which in the degree to which it has arisen, is a new phænomenon in the political world¹. One of Mr. Hume's conclusions from his reasonings upon this subject is, that the good policy of the magistrate consists in keeping the quantity of money in a state always increasing. To which I would add, increasing as little as possible: as little as is consistent with

¹ Vous, qui ne cherchez que l'argent, sans prendre garde où il va, ni d'où il vient, vous êtes les vrais ministres du cahos. *L'ami des hommes*, tom. ii. p. 33.

the extent of its commerce, and the capital necessary for carrying it on.

Before I conclude this head of enquiry, I would observe once for all, that in treating a subject of so complicated a nature, in which there is such an infinity of circumstances, connexions, and relations, it is impossible to preserve such order and precision as could be wished; or to keep the several parts from running one into another. It is impossible to confine the eye to a single point of view, when a thousand objects are every way incessantly opening to it. *Tout se tient*, to use the words of the Marquis de Mirabeau, *dans la machine politique, ainsi que dans la masse physique*.

It will be objected, that great private riches together with a large balance of trade have carried us through former, and can alone support us in future wars. I content myself with two general observations upon this point, and two maxims resulting from them. First, money without other resources is a mere phantom. The real strength of a nation is its industry and populousness. If riches are attended with effects prejudicial to these, they are in the same degree ruinous and fatal. First maxim. "Preserve your real and natural strength, tho' at the expence of an artificial and imaginary one." Secondly, I cannot but think the present method of raising supplies to be wrong in its first principles, and ruinous in its consequences. Every debt which the state contracts lays it under a necessity of contracting still farther. But no one can say that this will last for ever, or that the public is inexhaustible. We must, no doubt, take things as we find them. But if we find them in a bad way, we ought, if possible, to put them in a better. Second maxim. "Labour not to procure lenders to the state, but to lessen its necessity of borrowing."

the extent of its commerce, and the capital ne-

O F L U X U R Y.

LUXURY may be assigned as a second general cause of the evil we are considering. It is obvious, that the price of any commodity depends upon these three circumstances; the actual quantity of it brought to market, the degree of demand for it, and the value of money, its sign. We have seen in what manner the last circumstance is influenced by an increase of riches in a kingdom. It will be found that luxury strikes directly at both the former. By engrossing, as it were, to itself the commodities brought to market, and at the same time obstructing the means of their supply, it inevitably tends in every possible way to the diminution of general plenty.

Luxury in a state is the consequence of its riches; or rather, of that inequality of fortunes which is the natural effect of riches, and which commonly increases in the same proportion with them. Thus it always has been, and thus we

* The Dutch, it may be said, are a rich, yet not a luxurious people. But though the Dutch are rich, they still retain those arts and manners, by which they acquired their wealth. Their government, nay their very existence is founded upon commerce. And they have not yet lost those habits of frugality and industry, which the spirit of commerce requires and begets. The instant in which riches break in upon this spirit, they will open a door to all those disorders, which naturally arise from an inequality of fortunes, but which have been hitherto kept down and restrained in this republic by the universal prevalence of the commercial spirit. See *De l'Esprit des Loix*, liv. v. ch. 6.

may conclude it always will be¹. We shall in vain therefore expect in a wealthy and polished state that simplicity and frugality of living, which belongs to more rude and uncultivated manners. Moral as well as physical causes will have their effect. But though it be not in our power absolutely to stem the tide, we may perhaps be able to divert its course, so as to render it less pernicious, and it may be in some respects useful.

Luxury is a word of the most vague and indeterminate signification, and admits of almost infinite degrees; from the smallest indulgence above the mere necessities of life, to the highest refinement of delicacy, or the most extravagant gra-

¹ The real condition of the body of the people is not to be collected from the luxury of a few particular persons. While Italy was in the most deplorable condition of poverty and wretchedness, the clergy found means to carry the luxury of the table, of equipage, and even dress, to the most extravagant height. See *Observations sur l'Italie par deux gentilshommes Suedois*, tom. i. p. 229. The same writer, p. 292. mentions a supper to which John of Salisbury who lived in the twelfth century was invited by an Italian merchant, and of which he has left the following account. *Ce souper fut poussé tres-avant dans la nuit, & comme si la Sicilie, la Calabre, la Pouille, & la Campanie n'eussent pu fournir de mets assez delicats, on nous y servit toutes les friandises (delicias in the original) de Constantinople, de Babilone, d'Alexandrie, de Tripoli, &c.* The writer of the *Observations* adds this remark. *Un negotiant de Cadix pourroit aujourd'hui donner un pareil souper; & l'on en concludroit mal si l'on en concluait que l'Espagne est aujourd'hui un pays de*

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tification of vanity. There is, no doubt, a point between these two extremes, the nearer to which any state approaches, it will find itself in the same proportion in circumstances of real prosperity and happiness. This point is certainly not the same in all states; but depends upon an infinite variety of circumstances; upon soil, climate, produce, extent, situation, government, and the like. Some degree of luxury however, if it must be so called, is evidently necessary to the happiness and prosperity of every community¹. It has been already observed, that labour and industry are essential both to the well-being of individuals, and to the security and welfare of the state. But labour is far from carrying temptation with it to the generality of mankind. They must be roused to action and employment. And nature has interwoven in our frame and constitution the strongest incentives to action; our wants, and our passions². Our wants will

¹ In some of the ancient republics, as observed by the president Montesquieu, where an equality of lands took place, and was preserved by every possible method, the arts were less necessary to populousness and prosperity. But surely, even in this case, improvements both in the mechanic and liberal arts must add not inconsiderably, as well to the happiness of individuals as to the real strength and prosperity of the state. *De l'Esprit des Loix*, liv. xxiii. ch. 15.

² By wants I here understand particularly those of necessity and nature. For all our passions are, strictly speaking, the consequence of our wants of some kind or other; either natural or artificial.

not suffer us to remain in a state of absolute inaction. But when these are satisfied, we shall be satisfied likewise; and shall naturally return to our habits of indolence and repose, till our passions awaken us from this state of lethargy. Thus, to take things at the beginning, what temptation has the occupier of lands to cultivate more than is necessary to the support of himself and his family, if he has no prospect of procuring to himself thereby any additional conveniencies and pleasures? Lay these baits in his way, and his industry is at once awakened. He exchanges his superfluous produce for the goods of the artisan, and the manufacturer. These are at the instant animated with the same spirit of industry, and apply themselves with eagerness and vigour to those productions which can alone secure to them an abundance of the necessaries of life. Thus commences that circulation and perpetual exchange of labour, which constitutes the life, health, and strength of a state. The same active principles engage men to embark in foreign commerce; that is, to exchange their own superfluous produce and manufactures for those of other countries. Hence arises to them, and always will arise in a well regulated commerce, a greater plenty even of their own staple commodities, together with the additional enjoyment of those of other nations. An abundance of both which will proportionably multiply their resources of real wealth,

wealth, enjoyment, and power. Thus far then some degree of luxury is clearly of general utility: is necessary to set the first springs of industry in motion, and to diffuse vigour and activity throughout every branch of the community. But beware, that it advance not beyond this period. The moment it ceases to produce these effects, the moment it begins to weaken that spirit of industry which it had excited, it becomes ruinous and fatal. From maturity to corruption is but a single step. And tho' every advance towards the point of maturity carries its own advantage with it, yet when the crisis is once got over, the progress will be rapid on the other side; and every thing will be hurrying on to dissolution and decay. Fact, which is beyond a thousand arguments, has abundantly confirmed this tendency, and inevitable succession of things. Indeed an enormous luxury tends in numberless ways to destroy those very advantages, which a luxury duly regulated and restrained had produced. It either overwhelms or undermines every source of national strength. And to use the words of the excellent Helvetius, *l'époque du plus grand luxe d'une nation est elle ordinairement l'époque la plus prochaine de sa chute & de son avilissement.* But I forget that it is our present business to consider this scourge of humanity in one single view, as being an enemy to plenty, and to every source of plenty.

Luxury or a wanton consumption of any commodities, as it evidently increases the demand for them, and lessens their quantity with respect to the public, must in consequence necessarily enhance their price. When any one part of a community draws to itself more subsistence than comes justly to its share, it tends in the same degree to impoverish and starve the rest. It can only turn the stream of plenty into its own channel at the expence of all around it. This is a point too evident to be disputed; and is seen to be the fact daily in those places, which are more particularly the seats of luxury, and expence. But it is said, that, tho' in the first instance it be allowed to have this destructive effect, the evil is yet abundantly overbalanced by its necessary consequences; that a large and luxurious consumption encourages and enlivens industry, and all the arts of life; that it gives birth to a thousand occupations and employments, unknown to more simple and unpolished ages; and, as it infinitely multiplies enjoyments, so does it in an equal proportion hold out the means of procuring them. But in whom is luxury thus found to excite and cherish a spirit of industry and application? Not surely in the luxurious. In them it is utter destruction to this spirit, and to every active powers both of mind and body. But with the rest of the people it may have this effect. True; if you suppose a nation divided into the two extremes of
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rich and poor; or rather of lords and slaves. If moreover you can confine luxury to the former, and if the latter are so circumstanced, as to have no other employment, or rather are suffered to have no other employment, than to be procurers to the pleasures of their masters. A people in this deplorable condition are below all possibility of harm. And some few, who have had the ingenuity or good fortune to gratify the humours of the great, or to contribute to their pleasures, may perhaps avail themselves of their extravagance and profusion. But this is not, and, it is to be hoped, never will be the condition of this country. It is indeed the most miserable state of society that can be imagined. In England the several ranks of men slide into each other almost imperceptibly; and a spirit of equality runs through every part of the constitution. Hence arises a strong emulation in all the several stations and conditions to vie with each other; and a perpetual restless ambition in each of the inferior ranks to raise themselves to the level of those immediately above them. In such a state as this fashion must have an uncontrouled sway. And a fashionable luxury must spread through it like a contagion. I pretend not to say, how far we are at present infected with this vice. But I wish we are not got beyond the middle point of perfection, and verging hastily towards the most dangerous extreme. Our luxury, I fear, keeps full pace with our opulence.

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And both together serve more and more to widen the fatal gap between very rich, and very poor. Some of the evils of this distemper begin to make themselves very sensibly felt. And had not our constitution many great and admirable resources, as well physical as moral, some acting in their full vigour, and others perhaps capable of throwing out still greater advantages, the event would be but too easily foreseen. There is indeed no doubt but that luxury and expence diffuse for the instant some degree of heat and life, as far as they act. But it is, I fear, little better than the heat of a fever; ever accompanied with restlessness and impatience, and sure to be succeeded with universal languor and relaxation. Totally unlike that genial and generous glow which is brought on by moderate exercise; which braces up and strengthens the very springs of life and health, and leaves every power both of body and mind in redoubled vigour, and ability.

Unhappily for kingdoms, the causes of their corruption and decay are seldom perceived or attended to, till they have had their complete effect. The eyes of men are not open to public evils, till they are past cure, and it is become too late to apply a remedy. And those few, whom larger observation and a more elevated turn of mind have enabled to see farther into events, and to foretel effects from their causes, are sure to be ridiculed as a whimsical sort of political valetudinarians, and are too often branded even as enemies to their country by those who find it their interest, that things should go on in the same course.

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But what, after all, is the kind of industry, and what are those arts, which receive support and encouragement from an imperious luxury? Principally those which more immediately administer to that luxury, and to that false and frivolous taste which always accompanies it. Every thing that tends to ease, refinement, and the indulgence of an unbounded curiosity. These pursuits are sure to meet with ample recompence both of profit and honour in a luxurious age. And the natural consequence is, that all hands flock to them, as to a method of subsistence more honourable and easy, though often more precarious. Mean while objects of more solid and permanent utility fall gradually into contempt and neglect. Employments of the laborious kind are deserted. Every thing draws to the capital, the center of refinement and delicacy. The country is thinned. Agriculture languishes for want of hands. The manufacturer too (in those branches I mean, where the goods require a great quantity of labour, and which are therefore of most real and public utility) soon finds the same inconvenience. I am far from saying or thinking, that things are near this situation with us at present. But if the spirit of the age has really such a tendency, and if it be confessedly better to prevent evils, than to

See these points fully explained in the Marquis de Mirabeau's *L'ami des hommes*, tom. ii. ch. Du Luxe.

redress them, a caution of this sort may surely be hinted at without satire.

But if luxury be thus found to damp the spirit of industry, either by rendering men less fit for labour, or diverting them from that which is of most real and extensive utility, it is in another view, if possible, still more pernicious and fatal in its effects. For it is an enemy to population; the only natural resource of industry and labour. *Sæ-vior armis luxuria incubuit.* The sword indeed is guiltless of blood, in comparison with this universal ravager. Other causes may tend incidentally to diminish the numbers in a state. But luxury strikes at the very root of populousness. It is perhaps too much to say, (what indeed has been said) that the man who consumes what is sufficient for the support of two is in effect the destroyer of one. But surely an immense consumption by a few must, as has been already observed, have the most de-

I cannot help quoting upon this occasion a few lines from a speech of the first Cato against the repeal of the Oppian, which was a sumptuary law. “*Sæpe me querentem de feminarum, sæpe de virorum, non de privatorum modo sed etiam magistratuum sumptibus audistis; diversisque duobus vitis, avaritia & luxuria, civitatem laborare; QUÆ PESTES OMNIA MAGNA IMPERIA EVERTERUNT.* Hæc ego, quo melior lætiorque indies fortuna reipublicæ est, imperiumque crescit; & jam in Græciam Asiamque transcendimus, omnibus libidinum illecebris repletas, & regias etiam attractamus gazas; eo plus horreo, ne illæ magis res nos ceperint, quam nos illas. Tit. Liv. lib. 24. sec. 4. Such has been the language of true patriotism in every age and country.

structive

structive tendency. The good or evil of a large consumption depends entirely upon the number of consumers, and their ability to reproduce what has been destroyed for their support and maintenance. The man who does not in some way or other replace what he consumes is a burthen upon the public. He is indeed something worse. He robs a more useful member of that support to which he has a right. Consider then in this view the immense consumption occasioned at this very time by one single article of luxury, that of horses kept for pleasure. Every blade of grass, and grain of corn that goes to the subsistence of these animals, is literally so much taken from the mouths of the people. Consider the number of servants also of both sexes entertained in gentlemen's families; who consume without mercy the produce of the state, with very little return of advantageous labour. *Fruges consumere nati*. Nor is it a trifling circumstance, that these domestics are almost universally single: and are under the

Le luxe, says Rousseau, est une remède, beaucoup pire que la mal qu'il prétend guérir; ou plutôt il est lui même le pire de tous les maux, dans quelque état, grand ou petit, que ce puisse être, & qui, pour nourrir des foules de valets & de misérables qu'il a faits, accable & ruine la laboureur & le citoyen: semblable à ces vents brûlants du midi, qui, couvrant l'herbe & la verdure d'insectes dévorants, ôtent la subsistance aux animaux utiles, & portent la disette & la mort dans tous les lieux où ils se font sentir. Disc. sur l'inégalité, &c. Note 8. See in this whole note one of the strongest pictures that ever was drawn of depraved society.

strongest

strongest temptations to continue so. At Naples it seems a contrary custom prevails. The number of female servants is very inconsiderable. And the men are all married. Naples is in consequence almost incredibly populous. And were it not for some radical vices in its constitution, the state would, no doubt, be in the same degree flourishing and powerful. I might mention many other ways in which luxury tends to depopulate; but they would lead me too far. I shall only observe therefore, that the human race, as well as every other species of animals, will always multiply where there is plenty of subsistence for them; and that it will as constantly dwindle and fall away in times of scarcity and dearth. And indeed the fact is, that there has been little less than a suspension of marriage this winter amongst the poor. I speak with respect to the country only, and particularly that small part of the country in which I have had opportunity to make enquiry. The minds of men have been in constant agitation, as well from the pressure of present necessity and distress, as from the apprehension of greater.

See Sharpe's Letters from Italy. Letter 24.

These two circumstances of plenty and populousness will always be found to operate reciprocally upon each other. Plenty will produce people, and people plenty.

Salve, magna parens frugum, Saturnia tellus,

Magna virum.

Virgil. Georg. lib. 2.

But

But are there any remedies to be applied to this growing evil? Is it possible to reclaim an opulent and luxurious people back to habits of oeconomy, frugality, and usefull industry? Sumptuary laws will, I fear, have very little effect. And they have been generally found to defeat their own intention. Besides that laws are at best but bad instruments for the reformation of manners. Much however might be done by the ruling part of a community, if they were heartily disposed to do it. Example would have very considerable effect. The disease always begins at the top; the remedy therefore must be first applied there. The fountains must be thoroughly cleansed. Otherwise it will be in vain to scour here and there a pipe or a canal. The higher powers of every kind are these fountains. From hence the manners of the people are in general derived. Let then a spirit of retrenchment and oeconomy be first seen here. Let a check be given to those innumerable resources of luxury, which every way meet and

Lorsq'un prince veut faire de grands changemens dans sa nation, il faut qu'il réformé par les loix ce qui est établi par les loix, & qu'il change par les manières ce qui est établi par les manières. — Il y a des moyens pour empêcher les crimes; ce sont les peines qu'il y en a pour faire changer les manières, ces sont les exemples. De l'Esprit des Loix, liv. 19. ch. 14.

Virgil. Georg. lib. 2.

Magna virtus.

fascinate

But

fascinate the eyes of the interested¹. Places, pensions; lucrative employments, and lucrative sinecures. Let riches have the consideration they deserve. Let them not stand in the place of genius, talents, knowledge, abilities, integrity. Let every avenue to the temple of honour be closed against them. But I feel myself upon dangerous ground, and must fly for shelter to an authority which will not be disputed. Il y a un lot pour chaque profession. Le lot de ceux qui levent les tributs est les richesses; & les recompenses de ces richesses, sont les richesses même². La gloire & l'honneur sont pour cette noblesse qui ne connoit, qui ne voit, qui ne sent de vrai bien, que l'honneur & la gloire³. Le respect & la consideration sont pour ces ministres, & ces magistrats, qui, ne trouvant que la travail après le travail, veillent nuit & jour pour le bonheur de l'empire. L'Esprit des Loix, liv. xiii. chap. 20.

¹ The definition which the monks give of a cardinal occurs to me upon this occasion. The reader may substitute any other colour he thinks proper for, rubrum. Animal (rubrum) omnium beneficiorum rapax, capax, vorax.

² Apply this with equal justice to money-traffickers of all denominations.

³ Let this be extended to the gentlemen of the army and navy, and even to men of letters.

OF TAXES.

A Third general cause of the high price of provisions and other necessaries of life is the multitude of taxes under which this country labours.

The general tendency of taxes of all kinds to enhance the price of every thing brought to market is too obvious to need a proof. That a tax upon any article must have this effect upon that single article is self-evident. That it will also in some degree affect the prices of all other commodities is equally clear. The seller must raise the price of every thing he sells, in the same proportion as the prices are raised of what he has occasion to buy. For the same reason, imposts upon foreign goods necessarily raise the prices of home produce. The art of taxation then is always a principal object of government; and especially where the practice of funding prevails so much as it has done in this kingdom. And it is an object worthy all its attention. The security of the state, as well as the happiness of the people, turns upon this point. I enter not into the theory of this art. Its general and fundamental principles have been thoroughly opened

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and explained by several great writers¹. Chapters the first and seventh of the thirteenth book of the Spirit of Laws deserve to be engraved in letters of gold over the door of every Exchequer in Europe. There are however two or three circumstances upon this subject, that deserve particular observation.

It is universally allowed, that taxes upon luxury are of all others the most equitable, because the least prejudicial to the body of the people. And it is indisputably the truth. Whence happens it then, that the practice is so little governed by this principle? Whence happens it, that in some instances of taxation the burthen falls almost entirely upon the labouring poor? I have never heard more than one answer given to these questions which has the appearance of reason in it; and even that I have been sometimes sorry to hear. It is frequently said, that no taxes are found to answer so effectually the exigencies of government, as those which are laid upon things of general and necessary consumption. That taxes upon luxury are not to be depended upon for any thing considerable; either because there is not in fact any considerable number of these articles that are capable of being taxed; or because any considerable tax upon them would put

¹ Particularly by Mr. Hume, the President Montesquieu, and Mr. Rousseau, in his Discours sur l'économie politique.

a stop in great measure to the use of such articles, and in consequence defeat its own end; or because taxes of this kind are liable to be evaded. With respect to the first circumstance; I should think, that in so luxurious a nation as ours, in which all the wit and invention of man seem to be exhausted in providing an uninterrupted succession of pleasure and entertainment, a minister who would enter heartily into such a plan could not be at a loss where to lay his hand; unless indeed that his choice might be rendered doubtful from the multiplicity of objects that would present themselves to him. It would not perhaps so well become a private person to suggest any particulars of this kind. Because, if there are any such, they must necessarily be more obvious to those in whose province these arrangements lie. I shall however take the liberty just to mention one or two articles; though abundantly obvious to every body. Taxes upon animals of all kinds kept for pleasure strike in a double way at the evil we are considering; upon horses, dogs; I expect to be laughed at when I add venison¹. A tax upon horses appears indeed

¹ An additional tax upon parks, gardens, &c. over and above the common land-tax, would be justifiable upon two accounts: first, as the owners are better able to pay taxes: and therefore it would be in the true spirit of equality: (see the next note) and secondly, as such a tax might tend to

deed to be absolutely necessary upon every account; as I shall endeavour more fully to shew hereafter. To a tax upon servants I can see but little objection. Nay, even a capitation tax, (though one of the worst sort) in which a true spirit of equality prevailed, and in which the lower

restrain a species of luxury evidently prejudicial to the public, when carried to any great length; and would have in this view the effect of sumptuary laws. But, I greatly fear, things are at present in a very different way. The poor man's acre in tillage, of more real utility to the public than the whole park and gardens of the great man in his neighbourhood, is burthened accordingly with taxes. It is burthened in the very proportion in which it ought to be exempt. But it produces more; why therefore not pay more? And whose fault is it, my lord, that your thousand acres of park, and wood, and lawn, and water, which you have taken from the public, and have sacrificed to taste, are so many cyphers in your steward's account? — Excellent methods these of encouraging industry, and the most useful industry.

I do not know a more flagrant example of the abuse of words, than that of the word equality. It is a sort of proverbial maxim, that equality is equity. And a perfect equality undoubtedly is so. But how difficult is it to obtain this in most cases? Equality in a single circumstance is generally attended to, with an entire neglect of many others which ought also to be taken into the account. And it is then big with injustice. A pound rate is reckoned amongst the number of equal taxes. Thus the maintenance for the poor is raised in the several parishes; and also the land-tax in the several divisions. Here the rule of equality is observed in a single circumstance only. But is it equitable, is it equal,

lower people were entirely exempt, or, what would still be better, had premiums in proportion to the numbers of which their families consisted, would in many respects be less pernicious than some of the high taxes which are now laid upon the necessaries of life. But it is farther urged, that taxes upon luxury put a stop to the consumption of such articles, and consequently fail of their purpose. But surely this has not been found in fact to be the consequence of such equal, that a mere necessity should be taxed in the same proportion with a convenience, and a convenience with an absolute superfluity? According to the true spirit of equality, necessity should be taxed nothing, convenience little, and superfluity should bear if possible the bulk of the burthen. I could give an hundred reasons for this, did it come properly within my subject. In the several arrangements of the tax upon windows this spirit is better preserved. In the statute for repairing the public roads it is on the contrary absolutely out of sight. A pound rate would be perfection compared to it. Mr. Rousseau after having enumerated several circumstances requisite to an equality of taxation concludes thus admirably. *Si l'on combine avec soin toutes ces choses, on trouvera que pour repartir les taxes d'une maniere equitable & vraiment proportionnelle, l'imposition n'en doit pas être faite seulement en raison des biens contribuables, mais en raison composée de la différence de leurs conditions & du superflu de leurs biens. Opération très importante & très difficile que font tous les jours des multitudes de commis honnêtes gens & qui savent l'arithmetique, mais dont les Platon & les Montesquieus n'eussent osé se charger qu'en tremblant & en demandant au ciel des lumieres & de l'intégrité.* Disc. sur l'écon. polit.

taxes. A true spirit of luxury sticks not at small matters. Is the number of coaches, &c. lessened since the duty upon them? Or is there less wine drank on account of its higher price? But indeed it is much to be wished that such taxes had this effect. If luxury were checked there would be in consequence a greater abundance of the necessaries of life; and taxes upon them would be less grievously felt. Thus in Holland,

C'est bien mal connoître les hommes que de croire qu'après s'être laissés une fois séduire par le luxe, ils y puissent jamais renoncer. Ils renonceroient cent fois plutôt au nécessaire, & aimeroient encore mieux mourir de faim que de honte. Tant qu'il y aura des riches, ils voudront se distinguer des pauvres, & l'état, ne sauroit se former un revenu moins onéreux ni plus assuré que sur cette distinction. Disc. sur l'écon. polit.

Rousseau mentions another way in which such a check upon luxury, if brought about by taxes, would have a good effect. By lessening private expences those of the public, he says, would gradually decrease. And in many respects there is no doubt but this would be the consequence. Take once more the words of this admirable writer. Supposons que l'esprit du gouvernement soit constamment d'asseoir toutes les taxes sur le superflu des richesses, il arrivera de deux choses l'une: ou les riches renonceront à leur dépenses superflues pour n'en faire que d'utiles, qui retourneront au profit de l'état; alors l'affiette des impôts aura produit l'effet des meilleures loix somptuaires; les dépenses de l'état auront nécessairement diminué avec celles des particuliers; & le fisc ne sauroit moins recevoir de cette manière, qu'il n'ait beaucoup moins encore à déboursier: ou si les riches ne diminuent rien de leurs profusions, le fisc aura dans le produit

Holland, though taxes are perhaps higher than with us, yet provisions are cheaper, because luxury has not gained any considerable ground there. To the last charge, I fear, we must in some measure plead guilty. But then whose fault is it that these taxes are evaded? The fault must lie either in the law, or the execution of it. It cannot wholly arise from the nature of the thing. Though there may be greater difficulty in collecting taxes levied upon luxury, than those in which people of lower rank alone are concerned. Let this be applied to the plate act.

But some persons have had the hardiness to assert, that high taxes upon the necessaries of life contribute in their consequences even to the more plentiful production of them, and that the poor will be industrious only in the degree that they are necessitous. A doctrine this which avarice in private life has greedily seized, and has not failed to improve to its own purposes. But it is a doctrine as false, as it is inhuman. It is the common vice of narrow minds, thus to shelter themselves under general maxims; without considering that there are no general maxims which hold universally, and to their utmost pos-

produit des impôts les ressources qu'il cherchoit pour pourvoir aux besoins réels de l'état. Dans le premier cas, le fisc s'enrichit de toute la dépense qu'il a de moins à faire; dans le second il s'enrichit encore de la dépense inutile des particuliers. Disc. sur l'écon. polit.

sible extent. Thus in a former instance, because some degree of luxury has been found to animate industry, circulation, and commerce, it has been wisely concluded, that luxury of all kinds, and to every degree has the same beneficial tendency. And thus in the present case, because the wants of mankind are commonly the most powerful incentives to activity and application, and a general maxim has from hence arisen, that necessity is the mother of industry, the maxim has been extended to every kind and every degree of necessity, without any regard to its cause, to which regard ought principally to be had, or to the various other circumstances in which men are placed. Nothing so common, according to Swift, as for men to believe a lie for their own ease. But, I fear, it is more common for men to defend at least, if not to believe, a falsehood, when it is their interest to do so, even contrary to the strongest evidence both of reason and fact. I am therefore forced to retract in some degree what I have said as to the origin of these abominable doctrines. They arise, I fear, from vices of the heart, rather than of the head: from an unrelenting attachment to self interest solely, and a total insensibility to every consideration of humanity and virtue.

J'ai dit que l'industrie est fille de la nécessité; mais de la nécessité courageuse déterminée, & non d'accablement, L'ami des hommes, tom. iii. p. 87.

Let

Let us first consider the reason of the thing, if in this case reason can be separated from fact. In what circumstances then does necessity stimulate men to the highest exertion and stretch of their powers? Either when the difficulty can be overcome by one great effort, or by a desperate stand against an overwhelming power; or, when it is sure gradually to yield to a long and unre-mitted course of application and industry. But in all cases there must be a prospect of deliverance and success. In the former instance the object must be great and important, and in the latter the advantages must gradually open, and make themselves felt at every step. The first of these situations has been that of almost every nation at some period or other, both ancient and modern, of Greece against the Persians, of Rome against the Gauls and against Hannibal. And such particularly was the case of the United Provinces, first in shaking off the tyrannic yoke of Spain, and afterwards against the overwhelming power of Lewis the fourteenth. Examples of the latter kind are those many cities and states which have established themselves and flourished in spite of all possible disadvantages of climate, soil, territory, and sometimes even situation. The astonishing establishment of the Dutch, labouring all the while under almost every natural disadvantage, may serve instead of a thousand instances

stances of this. But how will either of these cases apply to a necessity brought on by oppression, or by a wanton and arbitrary exertion of power either public or private? Men always look up to the causes of their distress. Difficulties which arise from the nature of things are indeed commonly observed to sharpen men's industry, and even to increase their desire of surmounting them*. But the invariable tendency of oppression is to irritate and provoke. And oppression where protection and tenderness are due drives at once to desperation and madness. I have just observed, that a prospect of removing the difficulty can alone engage men heartily to combat with it. But what encouragement is there to struggle under a burthen which binds itself the faster to us at every effort we make to throw it off? If a man sees that the harder he labours, the higher he shall be taxed, or if he finds in private life that his wages are lowered in proportion to his industry, is it in nature that either of these circumstances should tend to increase his industry? They must always have a contrary effect, and will necessarily crush and extinguish it. They will either provoke men to seek their

* See Sir William Temple's account of the Netherlands.

* Thus an increase of family is often found to quicken the industry and care of the parents. But here the necessity is entirely providential; and the motives are the strongest in nature.

own remedy by opposition and violence, or, if resistance be impossible, will sink them into despondency, and a state of absolute annihilation. Oppression has always one of these two effects. It either raises men into heroes, or sinks them into slaves: If they cannot break their chains, they will soon be brought to lie down in them.

But it is said that facts are against us. Let us examine them. We have been told that the poor have been found to live better in years of scarcity and dearth, than when provisions have been more plentiful and cheap. I cannot but question the truth of this fact. Accounts of this kind generally come but from suspicious authorities. And it is, I must say, totally contrary to all my observation. But supposing the fact true, it may probably be owing to some other circum-

* It can never be supposed, that the author has a thought of justifying acts of violence and outrage of any kind; much less those which have lately disturbed the peace of several parts of this kingdom; where the laws afford every individual protection against wrong. His nature is most abhorrent from violence of all kinds. As men, and the more so, as ignorant, misguided men, the unhappy criminals had a claim to his compassion; and he honours the hand which has reached out mercy to so many of them. He is only combating principles; and those which he is convinced tend, more than any thing, to occasion such disturbances. Of all cruelty he has the strongest aversion to cruelty upon system. Moreover he cannot help thinking, that a single act of government to prevent an offence is worth a thousand punishments of it.

stances.

stances. If when provisions are dear, there happens to be plenty of work for the poor, they may perhaps be in a better condition, than when they want employment, though the necessaries of life are at a moderate rate. In the former instance they will naturally consider the calamity as providential, and may be incited thereby to double their industry and application. At least all clamour will be silent. Whereas in all cases of artificial necessity or avowed oppression mens minds are unavoidably agitated and inflamed, and they are rendered incapable of attending to their proper business. Many circumstances also may happen in real distress to increase and quicken industry. Any particular encouragement and liberality to the poor on such occasions will have in this way the force of a thousand other motives. But admitting the truth of this fact in all its extent, no sort of argument can be drawn from it in favour of voluntary oppression, or a necessity brought on by artifice or design. On the other hand it has been said, that an occasional increase of wages has been found to be prejudicial as well to those who received as those who paid it. And I myself have heard it asserted, that at Norwich, when upon some particular occasion of an extraordinary demand for goods the wages of the workmen were raised, the consequence was, that the masters could get less work done, though they most wanted it. And this was

was at once accounted for from the principle we are considering. That because the workmen could now earn as much in two days, as before they earned in three, therefore they would work only two days instead of three. The truth of this fact too upon the whole I was much inclined to question. That such might be the consequence of a sudden rise of wages with a few idle worthless fellows, I make no manner of doubt. Enough this to give occasion to the whole story. But the really industrious would never be less so from any extraordinary encouragement given to industry. And I cannot but think it as good a general maxim as ever was advanced, that the sure way of engaging a man to go through a work with vigour and spirit is, to ensure him a taste of the sweets of it. But supposing the fact in general to be true, many circumstances might concur to produce this effect. An antipathy taken up against their masters upon some former occasion (no matter whether well or ill founded) may have seized this opportunity of shewing itself. And revenge, we know, will often be gratified even at the expence of interest. From the fluctuating state of most manufactures and many trades, and the consequent fluctuation of wages, the masters and their workmen are unhappily in a perpetual state of war with each other. The invariable object of the former is to get their work done as cheap as possible; and they do not fail to employ every artifice to this purpose. Whilst the latter are equally
attentive

attentive to every occasion of distressing their masters into a compliance with higher demands. I know not on which side the blame lies oftenest. But I well know where, if the blame lies at all, it is the greatest.

I profess myself an advocate for the poor. And I glory in this profession, both as a man, and as a citizen. As a man, I would give them every enjoyment their situation admits, even though I should lose by it as a citizen. But in this last relation I am confident I should be infinitely a gainer. The poor are the real strength and support of a state. And the greater or less happiness of their condition is perhaps its truest barometer. The lustre thrown out by opulence and luxury is as delusive, as it is transitory; and has never been known to stand the test in a day of trial. *Honorez les pauvres*, says the humane Marquis de Mirabeau. And the poor perhaps with all their weaknesses and vices are not the least deserving our regard. The truth is, that we are apt in general to expect too much from them. We are apt to expect those to be the most faultless, who have the fewest lights for their direction. And after all from whence do they generally learn those vices of idleness and

¹ *La moindre faut que fait le miserable est un pretexte suffisant pour lui refuser tout secours. On veut que les malheureux soient parfaits. Helvetius de l'esprit, tom. ii. p. 38.*

luxury,

luxury, which are ever thus unpardonable in them? From their betters altogether. Luxury was never yet found to ascend. We are above being taught either good or bad by those whom we fancy beneath us. As if too these vices were only pernicious and unpardonable in the lower stations.

But it is farther perpetually said, that the poor are in a better condition in this kingdom than they are any where else. Admitted, with some few exceptions. But, in the name of mercy, is this a reason that they should not, if possible, be in a still better? Are not the rich also amongst us in a more eligible situation than most of their neighbours? But would they admit that as a reason why even their condition should not be bettered? What a figure would any one make in the House of Commons, who should oppose a bill to remedy some inconveniencies attending property, merely by shewing that property is attended with much greater inconveniencies in some other countries? Or, is it indeed come to this, that the happiness of a few thousands only is to be regarded, even though paid for by the misery of as many millions?

I have indeed the most entire conviction that doctrines of this sort have not the minutest influence on the counsels and measures of our ministers, and am still more confident that they would strike daggers into the breast of that humane Prince under whom they act. But as one often
hears

hears things of this sort thrown out in conversation, and as they seem to afford some poor kind of shelter for avarice and rapacity in private life, I could not entirely pass them over in silence. And if I have written with unusual warmth upon this subject, it is with a warmth inspired by humanity, and not by ill nature, or the love of invective.

I have dwelt the longer upon these three first heads of enquiry, because I have endeavoured to establish some general principles, which will apply to the particular subjects hereafter to be insisted upon.

END OF THE FIRST PART.

OF T A Z E S
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P A R T II.
OF THE

C A U S E S

OF THE

High Price of PROVISIONS

In some particular INSTANCES.

L'autorite seule ne fait jamais bien. —

Il faut faire trouver aux hommes leur avantage dans
les choses où l'on veut se servir de leur industrie.

FENELON.

AND

FENNIGSON RY & CO

PART II

OF THE

CASES & C.

In some particular instances.

OF THE

THE general habits of the mind upon
affecting the power of all kinds of pro-
non, and indeed of every thing ex-
changed and brought to market. They operate
universally upon the mind of all men, every
translation, and all the contents of the
will be in vain without to expect that a rene-
dy applied to any single part of the body alone
will restore it to health, and without if the vessels
are not in tone, and the mind in power, the
life relaxed and out of order. It is how-
great consequence to examine well those parts in
which the disease is supposed particularly to lie.

in order, either to expel the disorder from the
 if it be a real one, or to cure ourselves of the
 imagination of it. IN AN
 consideration of some particular circumstances
 are supposed to be the cause of the
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 ral subsistence. And I shall compare all I have

ENQUIRY &c.

PART II.

OF THE

CAUSES &c.

In some particular INSTANCES.

THE general causes hitherto insisted upon
 affect the prices of all kinds of provi-
 sions, and indeed of every thing ex-
 changed and brought to market. They operate
 universally ; and enter more or less into every
 transaction, and all the commerce of life. It
 will be in vain therefore to expect, that a reme-
 dy applied to any single part of the body politic
 will restore it to health and vigour, if the vitals
 are in a corrupt state, and the first springs of
 life relaxed and out of order. It is however of
 great consequence to examine well those parts in
 which the disease is supposed particularly to lie ;

in order, either to expel the disorder from thence if it be a real one, or to cure ourselves of the imagination of it. I proceed therefore to the consideration of some particular circumstances which are supposed to enhance the price of those several commodities, which are necessary to general subsistence. And I shall comprize all I have to offer upon this subject under two general heads, viz. corn, and cattle; beginning with corn, as being of all other articles the most necessary.

to be considered first and principally as food for man, and especially for that body of men which compose any particular state or community. In a secondary view, it is to be considered as a necessaries, but this in an absolute subserviency to its primary, natural, and most essential application as a provision. There is a distinction that ought to be constantly held in view, and all the arrangements of the laws of the kingdom ought to be governed by it. And thus it will be seen that the market is not to be regulated by the government, but the government by the market. They operate in different ways, and the market is the more powerful.

It ought to be remarked, that whatever is said in these papers with respect to corn is particularly applicable to wheat. The particular reasoning is not applicable to every other grain, but it is applicable to wheat. The author of the Essay on the Corn Trade, &c. &c. whom the public is much indebted to for his accurate examination of this subject, and particularly for his accurate and useful observations, lets some wrong notions prevail. I do not observe that his reasonings are at all affected by it.

OF CORN.

CORN is generally considered in two distinct views, either as food or merchandise. But, I think, this is not the true way of stating it; and may tend to mislead*. Corn is to be considered first and principally as food for man, and especially for that body of men which compose any particular state or community. In a secondary view, it is to be considered as a merchandise; but this in an absolute subserviency to its primary, natural, and most essential application as a provision. This is a distinction that ought to be constantly held in view; and all arrangements relating to the merchandise of corn ought to be governed by it. And thus all wise

* It ought to be remarked, that whatever is said in these papers with respect to corn is primarily and fully to be applied to wheat. If any particular reasoning is not equally applicable to every other grain, the author has only to say, that wheat was chiefly in his thoughts.

* The author of the *Essays on the Corn Trade, &c.* to whom the public is much indebted for a very laborious examination of this subject, and particularly for his accurate and useful calculations, sets out with thus stating it. But I do not observe that his reasonings are at all affected by it.

nations seem to have considered it¹; our own legislature particularly². It was clearly upon this principle that the last great stroke was struck in 1688³. And indeed it is upon this principle only that such a measure can be justified; or that corn can at all be suffered to enter into foreign commerce.

In times of more confined observation it was commonly supposed, that the sure way to preserve a sufficient plenty of any produce at home was to keep it from going abroad. And it is what naturally strikes every superficial observer. But experience and a more enlarged knowledge of mankind have taught us a different lesson. The great secret of legislation, as has been already observed, and cannot be too often inculcated, lies in making private and public interest draw the same way. And no where does this principle apply more strongly, and deserve a steadier attention, than in the instance before us. Nature will not be forced. Violent means can at least have no durable effect. But the operation from self interest is sure and permanent as na-

¹ The inscription in the front of the public granaries at Geneva is a strong and beautiful expression of this spirit.
ALIT ET DITAT.

² This clearly appears from the preambles to the several statutes relating to this matter; and particularly those of an older date.

³ The act for granting a bounty upon corn exported.

ture itself. And this kind of moral attraction may be depended upon, as much as any physical cause whatever. What then is the object of government in all its arrangements and measures with respect to corn, in this primary and most important view of it, as provision for the members of that community over which it presides? It is to encourage and procure such an extensive growth and constant supply of this produce, as will throw out the greatest plenty of it upon the whole. Particularly, to procure such an extensive and constant growth of it, as will throw out in a bad year a quantity sufficient to preserve the people from extreme necessity, and to prevent, if possible, at all events the misery and horrors of a famine. In this general object, I imagine, every one must be agreed; however differently they may be inclined to think, as to the means necessary to promote it. These indeed must be determined by the peculiar circumstances and situation of the country. Though there are some general principles applicable to every country, and almost all situations. Cherish agriculture with all your might, is the first great precept of nature to all the nations of the earth. Hinc omne principium. But what are the measures most effectual to this end? Obviously and solely these. Throw every temptation before the eyes of men to cultivate their lands to the highest pitch. Make it their interest to exert their ut-

most industry in this way. And let it stare them in the face that this is their interest. Laws, edicts, injunctions, prohibitions, will be all ineffectual without this conviction; and are of no use, but as they tend to imprint and inculcate it. To this single point therefore they ought to be directed. But by what means are men to be convinced that this is their interest? By being ensured a full vent for their produce, after they have laboured to procure it; by being ensured such a vent for it, as at all seasons, and, if possible, in all conjunctures will make them gainers by their labour. And how at length is this to be brought about? In a country like ours, both maritime and inland, I answer without the least hesitation, by encouraging exportation of corn. By encouraging it, not upon a principle of trade, or to enrich the merchant, not upon the landed principle, to enrich either the owner or the occupier of estates, not even upon the principle of navigation; (for these, though circumstances of real advantage, ought always to wait upon an object of a still higher and more sacred nature) but upon the more enlarged principle of general good, upon the principle of producing the greatest plenty upon the whole, and more especially at those seasons when it is most wanted. Nothing indeed is more certain, than that all these several interests are essentially and indissolubly united. The great point is, to preserve the uniting principle steadily

steadily in view, to restrain each particular interest from encroaching upon the rest, and to keep them all in absolute subserviency to the general and principal object.

* Is it now, or at any time, necessary to say, what is meant by general or public good? That point, to which all the different views of the legislator ought to be directed? That plain principle, which alone constitutes the bond of union between all his particular laws and acts of government, and forms them into one uniform and noble plan? It is precisely this: the good of the greatest number of those individuals who acknowledge and live under the same common form of government. An object far from being chimerical; and which may always be appealed to. Principe, says Mr. Helvetius, dont personne ne connoît toute l'étendue ni la fécondité; principe, qui renferme toute la morale & la législation, que beaucoup de gens répètent sans l'entendre, & dont les législateurs même n'ont encore qu'une idée superficielle, du moins si l'on en juge par le malheur de presque tous les peuples de la terre. De l'Esprit, disc. ii. ch. 17.

OF EXPORTATION AND IMPORTATION.

THE spirit of all laws and regulations relating to the exportation and importation of corn is the same. Their object is, primarily, to procure to the people as great a plenty as is possible of this most essential means of their subsistence ; and, as a necessary step to it, to give the farmer all possible assurance of a market for his crop even in the most abundant seasons.

It is needless at this time of day to take the pains to prove, that a free allowance of exportation, together with a restraint upon importation, tends necessarily to promote this principal object ; that both these measures, by raising the hopes of the farmer, and preventing his fears, engage him to the most unlimited cultivation of his lands. In a country whose territory is small, and incapable of affording sufficient support for its inhabitants, the importation of such support, and of corn particularly, the most necessary part of it, ought to be perfectly free and unrestrained. Such an import can alone supply the want of native growth, and afford sustenance for the people. On the other hand, a country capable of any considerable cultivation and a large produce

seems

seems to require a restraint upon importation. Not that there can be too great a plenty of corn, or of any of the necessaries of life; but that such import will unavoidably operate as a check upon agriculture at home, will have all the pernicious effects of such a check, and particularly will lessen the quantity of the commodity upon the whole. Tillage of lands, in England particularly,

"Some of our politicians in the beginning of the last century were so struck with the advantages which the Dutch reaped from an unlimited importation of corn, that they were for encouraging the same practice with respect to England. "The states of the Low Countries," says a member of the House of Commons in a debate upon this subject, "have a staple of corn, whereby they furnish all countries "with corn, albeit they have none or very little grown in "those parts; by which means they set their ships on work, "and it hath made that nation of any other most strong in "shipping and navigation. He desireth, there may be a "staple of corn here, rather than a prohibition of importation; for such a staple will set our ships at work, and "so strengthen this kingdom." Is it not surprising that the very hint he himself gives of the different circumstances of the two countries did not open his eyes a little farther, and lead him to the true means of encouraging and extending navigation, viz. by a free exportation? Sir Edward Coke saith, in the true spirit of a lawyer, "he never heard "of a bill against the importation of corn." A third member is for compounding the matter, and for importing in English bottoms only. Others seem to have reasoned more justly in regard to the effect of importation upon agriculture and the value of lands. One of them complains, "that the merchants practised with the bakers "to buy no corn of the countryman, but such as the mer-

"chants

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larly, requires great labour, and is attended with considerable expence. And the prospect of a proportionable reward from harvest will alone engage the farmer to embark heartily in it. But if, after all his labour and expence, he is liable to be underfold by imports from abroad, (where tillage may perhaps upon many accounts be carried on at an easier rate) what will be the consequence? He will neglect the plough for the crook. He will turn his thoughts wholly to pasturage, a mere diversion compared with the toil of husbandry; and in which there is much less risque of seasons, and indeed greater certainty of every kind. Employment is in consequence lost to a thousand hands, and bread to a much greater number of mouths. Foreign corn will indeed be brought to market, as long as there are pur-

“chants should import, to the overthrow of the country.” And another says, “he knoweth that in Devonshire (where there is scarcity of corn) the poor complain of the cheapness of corn; for now the farmer will not set the poor husbandman and labourer to work, because he can get nothing for corn, whereby the poor are like now to starve in a time of plenty, for that they want work, and can earn no money.” But not one of these honest statesmen had the least glimpse of the true remedy for all those evils of which they complained. A feeble ray of this light seems to have shewn itself soon after the restoration, or rather was the effect of some of Cromwel’s spirited measures. Its full lustre was reserved for an happier æra. See Proceedings of the House of Commons in 1620, and 1621, printed at Oxford.

chasers

chasers for it. But the numbers of these will soon dwindle to nothing. Poverty, the necessary consequence of idleness or want of employment, will unavoidably have this effect; it will diminish, first, the number of purchasers, and afterwards, the number of people. A free exportation will on the other hand have a quite contrary operation. By giving the farmer the highest possible assurance of a market for his crop abroad as well as at home, you are secure of his utmost attention to procure it. The whole force of his industry is bent this way. The plough is set at work in every corner of the land. Innumerable hands are engaged in this service. And every part of the country is full of life, activity, and vigour. Abundance of every thing useful is the necessary consequence; and populousness of abundance. By thus artfully touching the first and principal spring of the machine, the whole operation is ensured. The farmer sees and pursues his interest. His eyes are fixed upon this single object. But the hand which holds out the prize

When the Roman authors, says Mr. Hume, complain, that Italy, which formerly exported corn, became dependent on all the provinces for its daily bread, they never ascribe this alteration to the increase of its inhabitants, but to the neglect of tillage and agriculture. A natural effect of that pernicious practice of importing corn, in order to distribute it gratis among the Roman citizens, and a very bad means of multiplying the inhabitants of any country. Discourse of the populousness of ancient nations.

has

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has farther and more important designs, and will infallibly accomplish them. And thus in a country of any extent, and capable of a considerable produce, the general tendency of exportation is to abundance, of importation to scarcity of the very commodity imported. It may happen indeed, upon particular emergencies, and for a short time, to be otherwise. A wise government will be attentive to such emergencies; and will easily provide against them.

But suppose, that from some particular circumstances in a country, or those of the nations around it, a free exportation of corn, together with a restraint upon importation, be not found to answer sufficiently the purpose of an abundant produce; can there no method be thought of to quicken the operation of these measures? Our legislature has happily hit upon an expedient for this purpose. And the experience of near a century has abundantly shewn us the general course of its operation. It has given a bounty upon exportation of corn under certain regulations, and appropriated part of the public revenue for the payment of it. This was, it must be confessed, a bold stroke at the time; but it has succeeded beyond our most sanguine expectations. The general objection to this measure, that it

See the calculations by the Author of the Essays upon the Corn Trade, &c.

puts

puts public money into private pockets, and enriches particular persons at the expence of the whole body, is founded upon a false fact. For observe, that the bounty in this instance is not given in the minutest respect for the sake of the farmer as a farmer, or of the merchant as a merchant, for both of them indeed as citizens, but simply and solely, as a means of procuring the greatest plenty of this precious produce; that is, as a means of the most essential public utility. And there is really at the bottom nothing more extraordinary in this, than that public money should be paid in any other way to private persons for public services; than that a judge should receive a salary for administering justice to the people, or a soldier his pay for fighting their battles¹. Plenty of corn to the people is an object

¹ The Marquis de Mirabeau calls this a measure of a singular kind, and seems to disapprove it. The author however of the *Essays on the Corn Trade*, &c. is rather unfair in imputing this disapprobation to his envy of its success with us. This imputation is sufficiently confuted by that amiable spirit of humanity which runs through the Marquis's whole performance. Moreover, though he does not give the reasons of his disapprobation upon the spot, yet they are easily deducible from his general system; a part of which is, a free commerce of all kinds amongst all nations. It were well indeed for the world, if it were in a condition to receive this and all other his benevolent maxims. But, I fear, no plan of any kind, however salutary and extensively beneficial, will ever take place, which depends upon compact,

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ject at least next in utility to the two last mentioned; nor can money, from whatever quarter it comes, be better employed than in promoting it. Whenever indeed such a measure ceases to produce this effect, much more if it operate as a check upon plenty, let it be extinguished in an instant. An effect of this kind will soon make itself felt, and speak its own necessity. Let us in both cases trust to the sure evidence of experience and fact; and neither be clamoured nor reasoned out of what our eyes clearly shew us to be for our good.

But it is perpetually urged, that, though this measure may have been necessary to set tillage afoot in its infant state, it wants no such external assistance now that it is arrived to maturity and vigour. But I must confess for my own part, that I cannot see in the present situation of things the great force of this distinction. I cannot indeed conceive agriculture to be even yet

pact, and universal agreement. In the present state of things we cannot, I believe, give a better testimony of our love of mankind, than by a true spirit of patriotism, or love of our country; under the guidance, no doubt, of the eternal laws of justice and equity, without which it does not deserve that appellation. And were every breast in every country thoroughly inspired with this principle, the purposes of an universal benevolence would be in great measure answered. At least, there seems in the present situation of things to be no better way of answering these desirable ends. Mr. Hume has somewhere an observation to this purpose.

advanced

advanced to this boasted state of maturity and perfection. There are thousands and ten thousands of acres in this island, and perhaps many more in the neighbouring one, capable of an immense produce, lying absolutely in a state of nature. Forests, chaces, commons. Monuments these of false policy, or an insatiable love of amusement. And I am confident, that were any considerable check given to exportation, either by withdrawing the bounty, or by any other hitherto untried method of police, the whole body of the farmers would be alarmed, and they would be afraid of every shilling they laid out upon their lands. The consequence would be a gradual neglect of tillage; and things would insensibly sink back into that state, in which this measure found them, and from which it has happily delivered them. I say not, that this return would be as rapid as has been the advance. But, I think, such a return would sooner or later be inevitable; unless some substitute could be thought of, equally sure in its operation with that which we have so long experienced. The farmers, according

It is not to be concluded from hence, that no alteration ought to be made with respect to the bounty. Particular circumstances, such as the advanced state of tillage, may justify and even require some alteration. It seems to be universally agreed, that the bounty is extended at present to too high a price of wheat. At least, all whom I have heard speak upon this subject think, that it ought to cease at forty

G

shillings

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according to my observation, are always more afraid of a good year than a bad one. This has the air of a paradox. But the solution is plain. They are more afraid of corn's being at too low a price, in consequence of plenty, to pay them the expences attending the growth of it, than of what they call a middling crop. They prefer half a crop with a proportionably advanced price to a full harvest. They have in this case equal profit, and less labour: that is, more profit upon the whole. Now the farmer ought to be to

shillings the quarter at the highest, and very many at thirty two shillings. There has also been a scheme talked of for increasing the bounty, as the price decreased. And there seems to be no objection to it, but the greater trouble of continually ascertaining the price. But this trouble perhaps, unless the variations are very minute, will not be considerable.

And of this they are always sure, (unless indeed importation be allowed; for which however they are well satisfied to trust their good friends the landlords) because the number of purchasers is at all times very nearly the same. I have therefore frequently observed, (not without surprize at the time) that the farmers were much less solicitous about the weather, and the general run of the season, than their neighbours, who seem at the first view to be less interested in these circumstances, but in fact are more so. Oftener too have I heard these honest men complain of the time in which they sold wheat at five pounds the load, than of their bad crops. I do not mean to say, that the farmer will not always get as good a crop as he can: but that he will be apt to slacken his hand in tillage, unless he has at all times a sure market for his corn.

tally

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tally free from all apprehensions of this sort. He ought to be ensured a fair market for his corn in times of the greatest plenty. Nay it ought, if possible, to be ensured to him, that his profit will be in proportion to the degree of plenty. Such a conviction will alone animate him to the exertion of his utmost endeavours to procure it. And, with eyes immovably attached to his own interest solely, he will contribute in the most essential manner to that of the public. On the other hand, put it, if possible, absolutely out of his power to be a gainer by a bad crop, and an unfavourable year. Let him foresee with all imaginable certainty, that in such a season he will and must be a fellow sufferer with others. Let him not have the shadow of hope, that he shall gain by exporting to other countries that commodity which is so dearly wanted at home. On the contrary, let every port and passage upon such occasion be open to the reception of corn. And let there in cases of extremity be even a bounty upon importation. These regulations, I think, may be easily settled; and so as to be secured from any flagrant abuse; as far as any thing human can be so. The revenue might perhaps now and then suffer a little by these arrangements. But this is a matter of no consideration. That government must be weak indeed, which cannot find resources for its support, without interfering with

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the most valuable and essential interests of the community. Nor can it betray its weakness more effectually or more shamefully, than by daring to avow the necessity of such measures for its support. Not indeed that there is the least danger of its suffering upon the whole even in this way.

The corn laws of England appear to me to be founded in general upon the true spirit of public utility. There is however one manifest defect in them. The time when the bounty upon exportation shall cease is fixed by law; but not the time when exportation itself shall cease, and a free importation be allowed^{*}. But why not this fixed likewise? The legislature, no doubt, supposed, that its occasional interposition upon any emergency

^{*} Or rather our laws, as they now stand, seem not to have importation of corn at any rate in view. The duty upon wheat amounts to an absolute prohibition, till it arrives to the enormous price of four pounds the quarter. It happens in this as in many other respects, that things have taken a turn from one extreme to another. The main object of the legislature in our old statutes is to check exportation, in our later ones to prevent importation of corn, and indeed every thing else of native growth. In the former they had certainly the true object in view, viz. plenty; but were to the last degree short in their means of obtaining it. In the latter, infinitely more enlightened as to the means, they have, I fear, now and then dropped sight of the end, and have in consequence consulted rather too much particular interests; sometimes the landed, sometimes the trading interest, as either happened to be uppermost in deliberation.

requiring

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requiring it would answer all the purposes of a settled law. And perhaps some inconveniencies might have occurred in consequence of such a law; which however have not appeared. And, no doubt, the legislature has very frequently and very properly interposed its authority to this purpose. But supposing it was sure to do this always, and with the most perfect and disinterested regard to public good, (what by the bye can by no means be depended upon) yet would not even this come up to the point. It would indeed sufficiently answer one purpose of a permanent law. It would prevent corn from being sent abroad when it was wanted at home, and would also be an equal encouragement to importation when it might become necessary. But these surely are only secondary objects. The first, the most essential, and the most important object of such a law is, to prevent, if possible, its ever being put in execution; to prevent those circumstances in which alone it is to take place. The true spirit of laws, and particularly of commercial laws, is to operate, not upon things, but upon men; not by means of force, but by motive. In this view occasional interpositions can have very little effect. Those persons whose interest it is that the legislature should be inatten-

* There have been frequent prohibitions of exportation by act of parliament. But the duty upon importation has been taken off in very few instances.

live to such particular emergencies will feed themselves with hopes, that it may be so; and will regulate their conduct accordingly. I would have it therefore fixed as nature itself, when exportation should cease, and a free importation be allowed. The farmer, to whom these laws are primarily addressed, and whose conduct they are chiefly intended to influence, will then see clearly what he has to depend upon, and where his true interest lies. With all possible assurance of a market for the most abundant crop he will strain every nerve to procure it. This he will see to be the plain road to his interest; and this road he will steadily pursue, without perplexing himself with calculations uncertain at the best, because depending upon contingencies. On the other hand, he will have no temptation to withhold his corn, when the public wants demand it, from the vain hope of being able to carry it at a still greater advantage to a foreign market. He will moreover see, and, we hope, will dread the time, when corn shall be poured in upon him from every quarter. His fears will magnify this evil

And I could wish the prohibition to follow pretty quick upon the withdrawing of the bounty, and the import still quicker upon that. At whatever time it be thought expedient to refuse the bounty, it will certainly be equally expedient very soon after to put a stop to exportation, and to allow a free import. For the bounty is refused upon no other principle, than the want of corn at the time; which will equally apply to the other steps.

to him an hundred fold, and will engage him, if possible, to prevent it. Nor do I think, that the farmer will have in these circumstances any reason to complain. For if, on the one hand, corn is brought in upon him, when it is scarce, and at an high price, he has, on the other hand, by means of the bounty, the advantage of foreign markets, when there is greater plenty of this commodity, and it is at a lower price at home. These provisions seem to be an exact balance to each other. And we may hope to see in our corn laws, before the conclusion of the present session, a complete body of æconomical arrangement.

The subject before us is of so interesting a nature, that one scarce knows when to leave it. I shall only beg to throw it into one other point of view. Suppose in such a country as England both exportation and importation of corn were prohibited. How would this operate with respect to the quantity of corn grown? Most certainly to its decrease. The farmer would grow no more than he could dispose of with profit in the most plentiful year. He would be afraid of nothing so much as plenty. This growth would be totally insufficient for the national consumption in an unfavourable year. With all the farmer's

I consider the bounty all along in one single view, as a necessary help to exportation.

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heart. He would be secure of a price proportionable to the scarcity of his commodity; and, what is amongst the greatest of political evils, would profit by the sufferings of his fellow citizens. But even suppose the growth and produce in both cases to be equal upon the whole; this would not put the people in a much better condition. If corn would be cheaper in a plentiful season, it would be infinitely dearer in a bad one. And surely it is much better for the body of the nation, that it should be in general at a middle price, than sometimes at one, and sometimes at the other extreme.

It must be easily seen by this time, how entirely my opinion differs from those who imagine that the bounty upon exportation of corn has contributed to raise its price. I have not indeed the least doubt remaining with me about this matter; and am inclined to think, that this commodity would have been little short of double its present price, had not so happy a thought suggested itself to our forefathers. And for this plain reason; because most probably not half the quantity of land would have been in tillage that now is. Besides, that the several general causes, explained in the former part of the enquiry, must have the same influence upon this, as upon every other commodity. The want of a permanent law, fixing the time when exportation of corn should cease; and a free importation be allowed,

may,

may, I imagine, have contributed to the temporary advance of its price. The farmer may perhaps have now and then flattered himself with the prospect of sending his corn to a better market abroad, and have been thereby tempted to keep it back when already at an advanced price; to the injury of the public, and not unfrequently, it is to be hoped, to his own private loss.

I shall conclude this chapter with a singular account of some of the savage inhabitants of Africa from the Marquis de Mirabeau; which, he tells us, he had from a man who had been obliged to beat his way through that immense continent, and who had lived a great while amongst them. This man, he says, pretended to have found out the traces of some rational notions which these savages had formerly entertained, who have now little else of humanity, but its shape. He maintained, that they had been heretofore acquainted with agriculture and industry, but that these were soon lost amongst them in consequence of two political arrangements, worthy the degree of understanding to which those wretched people were then actually sunk. The first was, as soon as a proprietor of lands had made any improvements upon them, either by tillage, building, planting, or the like, the collectors of the revenue made at once a proportionable advance of taxes upon him. The second was, that under the pretence of keeping within the kingdom

dom a proper quantity of provisions in order to prevent famine, he was prohibited not only from transporting any of his produce abroad, but even from sending it out of one province to another without such licence as necessarily subjected it to all kinds of monopoly. And what was the consequence? When there was plenty of corn, it was devoured by insects, with which that country swarms, in the granaries. And when it was scarce, the monopolists were the gainers, and every body besides was thrown into want and distress. Cela decouragea le peuple, qui redevint Hottentot. This little history (whether true or fictitious it matters not) contains an admirable lesson of political œconomy. And it is easily seen at what European state the Marquis particularly glanced in it. *L'ami des hommes*, tom. i. pag. 87, 88.

stock

OF ENGROSSING.

THERE is a mystery in the affair of engrossing, which, I confess, I have not been able thoroughly to apprehend. I pretend not to write as one initiated into the secrets of trade; and am contented now and then to raise a laugh amongst those who are. Let us try however, if we can from common principles throw any light upon this subject.

It appears to me, that whoever lays up or engrosses any considerable quantity of corn must in general do it, either to the benefit of the public, or to his own prejudice. It seems to be for the public advantage, that corn should be laid up in a plentiful year. It is a provision against an unfavourable season. The private and public interest are in this case the same. The engrosser gets a higher price for his commodity, than he would have had, if he had brought it to an earlier market; and the people are relieved at the time in which they most want relief. The private stock is in effect a public granary. And the

I use the term, engrossing, in its most general sense; as including every means by which the commodity is kept back from market, and as applicable both to the farmer, and the merchant.

stock

stock is also in better hands, because it will most probably be preserved in better condition. On the other hand, if corn is laid up in a time of scarcity, and when above the middle price, this will in general turn out to the disadvantage of the engrosser. Should the succeeding harvest prove good, he will be obliged to sell out at a lower rate; and will in this case have manifestly injured himself, as well as the public. If the scarcity continues, or perhaps increases, he will then, as in the former instance, have consulted both the general good, and his own; and the more so, the longer such scarcity continues, and the more it increases. And it appears to me, that in all possible circumstances, if the public suffers, the engrosser will suffer with it; and, on the other hand, that any advantage to the latter will be accompanied with general utility. The utmost this that any legislature can do, where it does it effectually, for the good of community. And I see not but this would be done effectually, if the arrangements mentioned in the foregoing chapter, with respect to exportation and importation, were fixed by a permanent law. If the farmer is precluded from all hopes of selling his corn at a foreign market beyond a certain price, what possible temptation can he have to keep it back when above that price? And if the public suffers by such incomprehensible conduct, will not the farmer be necessarily a still greater sufferer?

But

But this, it may be said, is not enough. Tho' the engrosser may be mistaken in his calculations, and pay ever so dearly for his mistake, yet this will be but poor recompence to the public, whose interest is thus essentially sacrificed to the false views of private avarice. And there is no doubt but avarice is often most miserably mistaken in its accounts. Eagle-eyed with respect to the object of its prey, and indefatigable in the chase, it is frequently to the last degree blind and blundering in its methods of pursuit. A disorder this, I fear, for which there is no adequate remedy. For if men will shut their eyes against common sense, as well as their hearts against common humanity, they can only be left to that last great corrector of human folly, experience.

I am well aware, that it is the great, the universal, I had almost said the sole object of the body of farmers, to keep up at all times, as much as is possible, the price of corn; and that they have recourse to every human means and art to bring about this. The whole force of

* Some persons have been known to keep their wheat from market when at nine shillings and six-pence the bushel, in hopes of its advancing to ten shillings. And I have been informed, that there are farmers, who, whatever be the price of corn, make it a constant rule to preserve their stocks untouched to a certain time. With such persons it is in vain to reason.

their

their understanding is bent this way. And they seem to have arrived at a degree of dexterity in the art beyond what is seen in other professions. But then it is to be observed on the other hand, that there is a set of men as much concerned to keep down the price, as the farmer is to advance it, and men too sufficiently attentive to this business: the merchants, and, I suppose, the millers. The profits of the former must be unavoidably in proportion to the lowness of the price at which he buys. Every little reduction of the price at home will be so much clear gain to him; as the foreign markets cannot be affected by any small variations of it here. He will also have by this means a choice of markets. A circumstance, it seems, in many cases of considerable advantage. But I have been told, that the profits of the miller are greatest, (in what manner I know not) when corn is at the highest price; and that therefore the buyer and the seller are here manifestly in the same interest. If this be true, things are in a dreadful way indeed. And the whole body of the people lie in great measure at the mercy of men, who have not been found to be particularly inclined to shew mercy. I think however there must be a mistake

The farmer is indeed become so thorough a tradesman, that his old epithet seems to have quite left him.

I am led upon this occasion to take some notice of a foolish trite objection to general reflexions and censures, as

unfair

take in this matter. I hope the fact itself is not true. If it be, it ought certainly, if possible, to be prevented. There must be something wrong, when any particular body of men are necessarily gainers by the public loss, and when too this gain is so ad-
 unfair and unjustifiable, because involving in the accusation many who are not chargeable with the crime. Now the fact is, that these are the only kind of censures, in which you are almost always sure of being fair and right; because they are general: because they are levelled at some general principle or spirit, which commonly enters more or less into the character of every individual member of the several different classes of men in society. That there are professional characters is as certain as that there are different professions. Each has its particular cast; some more, others less favourable to society and public good. Each different way of life stamps its own peculiar impression upon those who are engaged in it. And if a few privileged minds have been able by natural disposition or the force of reflexion to break from these shackles, to soar above the genius of their profession, and have even possessed in an eminent degree those virtues to which it is in general averse, (as, no doubt, some such there are) these extraordinary instances are an exception, which serves only to confirm and establish the general rule. Indeed half an hour's conversation with the man of estate, the merchant, the soldier, lawyer, or divine, will seldom fail of shewing you which way the bias lies. For a particular favourite interest too always accompanies this peculiar cast of character; and indeed in great measure causes it. Step into certain great assemblies, and you will hear the landed interest echoed from bench to bench. A most important interest no doubt; but still subservient to the good of the whole community. In the city and upon change the debates turn upon a different topic. And the world has of-

gain is purchased by such loss ; especially, if it be at all in their power to occasion or contribute to it. But this, I think, cannot possibly be in the power of the miller. For supposing it true, that the miller is in general a greater gainer at the end of a year, in which wheat has been at six shillings the bushel, than when at four, I see

ten found to its cost what has been the general object of purely ecclesiastical assemblies.

These several interests, of a middle kind between the personal advantage of each individual, and the general good of the community, (though plainly founded upon the former) are oftentimes too powerful for both. General observation therefore and censure of their wrong tendency is not less useful, than just. Persons of the most liberal turn ought to remind themselves of the influence which their connexion with particular men and things is likely to have upon their sentiments and conduct. Because too this influence is oftentimes the strongest upon the most ingenuous minds : it being generally, though absurdly enough, represented to them under the notion of a point of honour ; and the real interest of the public often confounded with that of a particular society or profession. Above all, the governing part of the community ought to be upon its guard against this extended kind of selfishness, if I may so call it, which has of all others the greatest weight in society.

I thought it necessary to introduce these observations, as well because I think them just and unexceptionable, as by way of apology for having now and then taken the liberty of censuring, *en politique* merely, the reigning maxims and spirit of particular bodies and classes of men. A liberty quite consistent with the highest sense of the utility of these bodies, and the most perfect esteem for many of the individuals which compose them.

not

not how this could operate to the actual advance of its price. It must be the miller's object, as it is that of the buyer of every denomination, to get his goods at as cheap a rate as possible at every distinct market; and his profits must be, *ceteris paribus*, in exact proportion to the cheapness at which he has bought. If the miller is in possession of a secret to alter this proportion, I must confess him to be quite out of my reach, and to be master of a legerdmain of which I have no conception. We may therefore, I think, safely retain the miller on the side of the people, as a buyer at least. As a seller, we shall have something more to say to him hereafter.

There is indeed an appearance, that in the present course of the corn trade the farmers have the markets too much in their own power. And it is certain, that our corn markets do not come up to the true notion of a market; as the commodity is not in general brought to market, and the price therefore is not ascertained in the natural, that is, the true and just way. The price of any commodity is naturally fixed by the quantity offered to sale on the one hand, and the number of purchasers on the other. But in the present case the first requisite is in great measure wanting. The purchasers are in the dark as to the quantity of corn. At least, the farmer will as much as possible endeavour to keep them so. It has been therefore the wish of many, that far-

98. OF ENGROSSING.

mers were obliged to bring their corn to market in bulk, and that the old laws against engrossing, regrating, and forestalling were put in strict execution. This would undoubtedly be an effectual bar to monopoly and artificial dearth; at least as strong a one as the nature of the thing will admit. But then it seems to be totally inconsistent with the whole system of the trade, as at present established and carried on. It would be at once a mortal blow to foreign exportation. The coasting trade would also be infinitely checked and embarrassed; by means of which an incessant and most beneficial communication is now kept up between the several parts of the kingdom; each of which hereby enjoys the advantages of the rest, and the whole system is preserved, as nearly as possible, in a state of equality and equilibrium.

In those parts of the kingdom which are absolutely inland, and also out of the reach of navigable rivers the practice of selling corn by sample has not been long introduced*. And I wish in such situations it never had been introduced. When any tract of country subsists upon its own produce, and has little communication with others beyond a certain distance, there is no sort of occasion for merchants, factors,

* This, I imagine, has been always the method in respect to barley. This grain is generally sold in large quantities, and to a few manufacturers of it.

jobbers,

jobbers, badgers, or middle men of any kind. These are all pernicious to the body of the people, where they are not necessary. And in the above-mentioned circumstances they clearly are not necessary. Why not the farmer bring his corn to the neighbouring market towns, and sell it at once to the consumer? The price then would be fairly settled. Monopoly would be in great measure prevented: and, what is of the greatest consequence, there would be no intermediate profit between the grower and the consumer, all which must be so much loss to the latter; that is, so much public loss. This is evidently the spirit of the old laws above-mentioned. And a most admirable spirit it is in all circumstances that will bear it. What these are is obvious; viz. when the commodity is of such a kind as either ought not, or cannot be made to enter into any distant exchange or commerce. Nothing of the former sort occurs to me. But there are many commodities intransportable to any distance, either by their own nature, or for want of the necessary means of communication. Corn, when grown a considerable distance from the coast and from navigable rivers, is evidently of the latter kind. In all such cases, and where they can clearly be distinguished, the laws against engrossing, forestalling, &c. which it is the fashion so much to ridicule, appear to be not only practicable, but highly beneficial and even necessary.

They were enacted at a time when the whole kingdom was pretty much in these circumstances with respect to the several articles of provision which they were intended to regulate. And they were levelled doubtless against evils then actually existing, and whose pernicious consequences were felt'. Nam sicut ante morbos necesse est cognitos esse quam remedia eorum; sic cupiditates prius natæ sunt quam leges quæ iis modum facerent *. Since that time things have been going gradually more and more out of this situation. Communica-

* I was so much pleased with the old statute against forestalling; with the minute description of the offence, and with the admirable gradation of punishments annexed to it; that I could not help copying it, and give it here for the amusement of the reader.

Precipue ex parte Domini regis precipiatur quod nullus forestallarius patiatur in villa commorari qui pauperum est depressor manifeste & totius communitatis & patrie publicus inimicus qui bladum pisces allec vel res quascunque venales per terram vel per aquam venientes obviando pre ceteris festinant lucrum sitientes vitiosum pauperes opprimentes & divitiores decipientes qui sic minus juste illo qui eas portaverat multo carius vendere machinant qui mercatores extraneos cum rebus venalibus venientes circumeunt offerentes se venditioni rerum suarum & suggerentes eis quod bona sua carius vendere poterunt quam vendere proponebant & sic arte vel ingenio villam seducunt & patriam Unde primo convictus graviter amercietur secundo convictus patiatur iudicium pillorie tertio incarceretur & redimatur quarto abjuret villam Et hoc idem fiat de forestallariis universis & similiter de hiis qui consilium auxilium vel favorem prestaverint.

* Tit. Liv. Lib. 34. cap. 4.

tions of all kinds have been opening every day, and in consequence internal commerce perpetually increasing. It would be easy, were it necessary, to mark the several steps of this progression. Things however have not been, nor are they yet ripe for a total repeal of these laws. In many respects they will be always useful. Why then may not the distinction be made, and a new law be framed upon it? With respect to corn indeed, unless in the situations above-mentioned, the old regulations, I doubt, cannot possibly take place, but at the hazard of sending us two or three centuries back in our commercial

These situations are indeed perpetually decreasing, and will be very soon at an end. The goodness of our roads, the great number of our coasting vessels, and more than all our daily improvements in inland navigation render the communication between the several parts of the kingdom more and more easy. I am particularly glad to see a spirit of improvement in the latter way gaining ground amongst us. It in every view deserves all possible encouragement. And it is to be hoped, our legislature will never suffer it to be checked by the interposition of any private interest whatever. How nobly indeed might even public money be employed in works of this kind, which are above the reach of private persons, did it not unhappily know its way else where, long before it is brought into the Exchequer? The great advantages of water-carriage are obvious. The particular commodities conveyed this way come much cheaper to the consumer; and, what is in my view a circumstance of still greater consequence, there is a great saving of horses, that is, of useless consumption.

improvements. There are disadvantages peculiar to every state and period of society. Nor indeed is there any human good without its evil. The great disadvantage of the present system of the corn trade is the want of an open market. And it seems to be a disadvantage which cannot possibly be removed, without throwing such shackles upon the trade itself, as would soon deprive it of motion and vigour. We must here trust ourselves in the hands of the buyer. And, I think, we shall be pretty safe in his hands: at least, as long as both our interests lie the same way. When this ceases to be the case, the trade cannot, I am sure it ought not to subsist a moment.

Under the head of engrossing corn something must be said of public granaries and magazines of this commodity. These have been of late much recommended, and, I doubt not, with a view to the public good. But are they likely to answer the great purpose of plenty to the people; to secure the greatest supply upon the whole of this commodity; and particularly in bad years? Are they in this view preferable to the present system of the corn trade? For subsist together they cannot. These are points which ought to be well considered. The experiment is dangerous. And if it does not succeed, the consequences may be fatal. I confess it to be my opinion, that the probabilities are against its succeeding.

ceeding. I think, public granaries would not answer the purpose of a plentiful supply. And I think too, they would be liable to such abuses in the management, as no public attention could prevent. But these institutions, it is said, have been found to be of the utmost utility in other countries: why then not with us? Let us consider the peculiar circumstances of those countries; and if we find ourselves in their situation, let us, with all my heart, adopt their maxims and measures. The two countries instanced upon this occasion are Switzerland, and Holland. Switzerland is a country of considerable extent, but not in general capable of very high cultivation. It is in great measure without commerce, and without the means of commerce. It subsists and must subsist chiefly by its own produce. It is incumbent therefore upon it to make the most of this produce for its own use by every method in its power. Public magazines seem to be in such a country an institution of indispensable necessity. Otherwise it must trust to the crop of the year, for the year's subsistence. A thing always to be avoided; and which must be sometimes attended by the most dreadful consequences, in a country particularly, whose cultivation is limited by natural circumstances. But Switzerland, though a country of some extent, is divided into a great number of small districts and territories. It has

also very little concern with other states, and is almost wholly taken up with its own internal government and police. In these circumstances magazines may be properly managed. The magazine of each town or district will be under the eye of the governors of such district. Better care will be taken both of the commodity, and the managers of it. The situation of Holland is in most respects diametrically opposite to this; and yet admits of similar institutions. Holland grows little or nothing for itself, and is obliged to draw its chief means of subsistence from abroad. Want of produce here has just the same effect as want of commerce in Switzerland; and both are supplied by expedients of a like nature. Holland indeed is not an example quite in point. For it has in fact no public magazines of corn. There are very large ones in the hands of private merchants. These answer all the purposes of public granaries; and in most respects answer them much better. It is not indeed unlikely that some public provision of this kind would have been thought necessary in that country, were there not immense quantities of corn perpetually in private hands. The Dutch magazines are indeed managed upon a principle of trade entirely. As great a stock as possible is laid up when the commodity is cheap. From hence the people are constantly supplied with it at a moderate and even rate; and the merchants

at

at the same time are enabled to send it with greater advantage to foreign markets. And thus have these two countries, the one by its provident institutions and good management, the other by its unvaried attention to an œconomical commerce, secured to themselves, as far as this can be done, in all circumstances a sufficiency of this first necessary of life; and perhaps their people are in this respect in an happier condition, than any other nation upon earth.

The very first glance upon the face of this country shews it to be totally different from either of the former. Had Holland a large and improveable territory, that intelligent nation would soon avail itself of so noble an advantage by all the means of an active and spirited commerce. And had Switzerland the advantage of external communication, her eyes would be unavoidably open to more extended views, and she would soon be above those narrow measures, which her state of imprisonment now render necessary¹. Nature has happily given to England both these advantages in their very highest degree. Blest with an extensive and most improveable territory, and with all the noblest means of

¹ Views of this kind seem to be entertained of late by some of the states of Switzerland. See the Marquis de Mirabeau's *Memoire sur l'Agriculture*, to the society established at Berne for its encouragement, p. 114, &c.

commerce in her hands, she has every avenue of plenty in her power. Her acres in tillage are her natural granaries; and will effectually answer every purpose of these institutions. But it is by commerce only that these magazines can be filled. And the more they are emptied by commerce, the more inexhaustible will they be. I insist not upon the particular abuses that the institutions we are considering would be liable to in this country. They could not be under the immediate inspection of such a government as ours. And, I fear, our national morals are not in a state of purity to be trusted with the management of a business of so delicate a nature; in which private interest would frequently be found to interfere with that of the public. Directors here, whatever care was taken in the appointment of them, would soon differ very little from directors every where else. Many other inconveniencies have been mentioned as likely to attend these institutions, particularly by the author of the Essays on the Corn Trade, to whom I refer the reader.

I shall only observe farther upon this subject, that Rome at present affords a striking instance of this false and pernicious policy with respect to corn. While the corn trade remained free, the ecclesiastical state not only supplied its own people, but many of the neighbouring countries, with this valuable commodity. But since the govern-

government has taken the management of this business into its own hands, the consequences have been fatal. A total loss of the foreign markets; a manifest neglect of tillage; and a decrease of people. But take the account in the words of that enlightened writer from whom I received it, and whom I have already quoted.

Les bleds sont l'affaire la plus importante de la chambre, la plus utile en apparence pour l'état, mais en effet la plus ruineuse. Il fut un tems où cet état fournissoit de bled la ville & les états de Genes, & une partie de la Toscane. Venise en tiroit en même tems une partie du bétail pour les boucheries. Depuis qu' à titre de privilège exclusif la chambre s'est emparée du commerce & de la traite des grains; depuis que les propriétaires & les cultivateurs ne peuvent plus vendre leurs bleds qu' à la chambre; depuis que les boulangers ne peuvent se fournir que dans ses greniers, les traites des Génois ont cessé, les colons ont négligé le nourri, la cultivation & la population ont diminué à vûe d'œil; en un mot cette exclusion est vraiment une calamité perpetuelle. Observ. sur l'Italie par deux Gentilshommes Suedois, tom. ii.

P. 321.

There is another kind of engrossing, which has lately been much talked of, and seems to occasion general complaint; the engrossing of farms, or the accumulation of a large quantity of land in the occupation of a single person.

This

This practice is gaining ground daily, and is perhaps a matter of a more serious nature, than it may at first view appear to be. Let us see then, as briefly as possible, what may be suggested on either side of this question. The conclusion, I imagine, will be, that there is a middle way between the two extremes more eligible than either, and in which the advantages of both, if any such there be, may be obtained, and their evils in great measure avoided.

The only argument of a public nature which I have ever heard in favour of such an accumulation of lands in the occupation of one person is, that the produce is thereby increased upon the whole, and also obtained at a cheaper rate. This is, I acknowledge, a real and considerable advantage, supposing it to be the truth of the case. I freely profess myself to be an inadequate judge of this matter. However, I am pretty well satisfied, that there is but little real ground for this representation; and am much inclined to think, that there is something else lying at the bottom. Of one thing indeed I am perfectly satisfied, that full credit is not to be given to the accounts of those whose interest it may be to misrepresent. I will allow that a number of farms, suppose to the amount of one thousand five hundred pounds per annum, in the hands of a single person, may produce more upon the whole, than the same lands divided amongst fifty or sixty occupiers.

occupiers. Though I confess, that even this does not appear to be quite a clear point with me. But I see not, at any rate, why the produce should be greater in this instance, than if they were properly parcelled out into eight, or ten, or twelve distinct farms, as the different soils, and other circumstances of the lands would admit. It has been commonly supposed and said, that all business is best carried on under the inspection and management of the master. And how far the eye of a single person can reach in the case before us, I pretend not to determine.

But it is urged, that the value of the lands is evidently raised by this method of accumulating them, and that a single tenant is better able to pay his rent, and even to pay a larger rent, than when an estate is distributed amongst a number of occupiers. And how is he enabled to do this but by an increase of produce? This increase of the value of lands I allow also to be a real advantage, supposing there is nothing by way of balance on the opposite side of the account. But if it be found, that this advantage to any particular interest is accompanied with evils of a public nature, and a more extensive influence, I hope it will not be avowed. The secret is indeed, I fear, now let out. For, I fancy, it will be very easy to account for the circumstance above-mentioned without having recourse to the supposition of a really greater produce. Suppose,
for

for example's sake, a farmer upon an estate consisting of two hundred acres saves one hundred pounds per annum, upon an estate of double that quantity, something less than double that sum, of treble still less than treble, and so on to any given number of acres, for instance, two thousand: it is evident he will be able to give an advance of rent upon every increase of lands, above the proportion of the rent he gave for the first quantity in his occupation. If he gives one hundred pounds per annum for two hundred acres, he will be able to give two hundred and twenty pounds for four hundred: for eight hundred acres suppose four hundred and sixty, and so on: and be a sufficient gainer by every addition. He will be able to do this, notwithstanding a constant diminution of profit upon each of the additional lands, from his gross profit upon the whole. And he will have sufficient temptation to do it. Thus upon the above supposition, an estate of two thousand acres occupied by ten different tenants gives to each tenant the yearly profit of one hundred pounds. Now supposing to a single person occupying the same lands the profits upon the whole to amount only to eight hundred pounds per annum, a fifth short of what they would be in the former case, even upon the supposition of so considerable diminution of profit, the single tenant will clearly be enabled, and

and abundantly tempted too, to give an higher rent than could be afforded by the other ten tenants standing in his place; and perhaps the proprietor may be more secure of his rent. There will be also a single farm-house to be kept in repair, instead of ten. A circumstance this much attended to by the proprietor, but big with mischief to the public. There is therefore most evidently no kind of necessity for having recourse to the supposition of a greater real produce, the only advantage of a public nature alledged in favour of this practice, in order to account for an advance of rent in consequence of it. I am indeed inclined to think from the little I have been able to observe of these matters, that the gross produce is very considerably less¹. But admitting the fact of a real increase of produce by this practice, what however I should be very loth to admit

¹ I am indeed upon farther reflexion and enquiry entirely satisfied of this. A farmer upon an hundred and fifty or two hundred acres of land makes the most of every inch of ground he has. He clears all he can, and ploughs to the very edge of his fence. He also makes money in ways totally neglected by the great merchant-farmer; by hogs, poultry, and the like. All these are of advantage to his neighbourhood, and are perfectly consistent with the larger branches of his business. The other is not only above attending to these trifles, but it is out of his power to do it any where, except at his own farm-house.

upon

upon any evidence short of demonstration, let us now turn our eyes to the other side of the account, and examine whether any thing is to be found there, sufficient to counterbalance this single circumstance in its favour.

The first, the most obvious, and the most real inconvenience attending this practice is that inequality of fortunes which it inevitably produces. An evil to be avoided as much as possible in every part of the community, but particularly amongst those bodies of men, upon which the strength and stability of the state more especially depend. The occupiers of land naturally claim the foremost place amongst these; and form a body on all occasions of the utmost importance to the security and welfare of the public. But a spirit of equality is the very life and soul of this body; and can alone diffuse health, and vigour, and enjoyment through every part of it. When a contrary spirit prevails to any great degree, and the cultivators of one common soil fall into the two fatal divisions of very rich and very poor, every evil will necessarily follow. They lose at once their true rank in society. Instead of an hardy, free, and intrepid race of men, contentedly enjoying the sweets of labour and alternate ease, the state's most useful subjects in peace, and its best soldiers in war, we are presented with the horrible picture of a few tyrant planters amidst a croud of wretched slaves. A
picture

picture of all others the most shocking to humanity¹.

Nothing indeed is so unnatural, as that immense fortunes should be made by agriculture; because they must be made at the expence of the whole body of the people. Nothing of so fatal consequence; because they open a door to avarice, rapacity, and every other passion the most pernicious to society. They admit these passions into scenes, from which nature has been fond of excluding them; and where they will not fail of being attended with universal devastation and wretchedness.

The common happiness indeed of those engaged in the cultivation of lands must appear at the first view to be infinitely diminished by the accumulation of them in the hands of a few; whose wealth will in this, as it is in most other instances be purchased by the poverty of thousands. Where one farmer grows enormously rich, a thing in itself wrong and pernicious, ten would be enabled to live decently and comfortably, to maintain and bring up a family, and af-

¹ Ireland, I am told, is too much in this situation. A few large farmers engross a whole country, and lett small parcels of their lands to a number of under tenants, whom they oppress almost at will. Here the two evils meet upon the very same spot. But I am glad to hear, that this practice is upon the decline; and that gentlemen are daily laying out their lands into farms of a moderate and convenient size.

terwards to put their children in a way of supporting themselves. And can there be a moment's doubt, which of these two situations of things is most eligible? Most productive of private happiness, or conducive to public good? Depopulation too must be in some degree the necessary consequence of this practice; as it is the natural consequence of wretchedness and beggary. The very face of the country is gradually changed. Farm-houses are pulled down, or suffered to drop, and perhaps a barn only left in their room. Villages lose their inhabitants. And an universal eagerness soon shews itself to leave a situation, in which there is no hope, scarce a possibility, of advancing a step higher, than that of being a common labourer under a master who is little less than a petty tyrant¹. This practice has also, above all others, a direct and unavoidable tendency to monopoly. But it may be said, we have already provided against this evil. We have indeed endeavoured to do so. We have endeavoured to teach avarice its true method of

This reasoning may in most respects be extended with equal justness to manufactures. The more these are spread, the greater advantage will they be in a public view. They will afford to a greater number of people the means of procuring the necessaries, and even the comforts of life. By monopolies of all kinds a few individuals raise lordly estates, and the bulk of the people are sunk in the lowest state of poverty. Oppression of all kinds is the natural consequence.

calculation.

calculation. But unhappily the eyes of avarice, though it professes to be the coolest and most reasoning of all the human passions, will be sometimes shut against the strongest light of conviction. If therefore it refuses to be taught, it should, if possible, be restrained. It is a monster to be bound with every chain. Whereas the present practice of accumulating farms in the hands of a few tends to give this passion its full loose in every way. For though the sense of a common interest is frequently sufficient to unite great numbers in one common plan of measures, yet it is most obvious, that combinations are more easily formed amongst a few; the terms of such combinations more clearly settled and understood; and their purposes more effectually carried into execution.

This engrossing of farms is therefore undoubtedly to be considered as an evil, which ought to be checked, before it is carried to any greater lengths, and becomes universal*. And it is a practice which can effectually be checked by authority only. It is moreover a matter, in which authority will interpose with singular propriety; because the interest of those who are entrusted with authority would be chiefly affected by such interposition. Though we do not easily suffer

* I have been informed, that in the hundreds of Essex particularly there are farmers who hold lands to the amount of a thousand or fifteen hundred pounds per annum, and one even to the amount of two thousand five hundred pounds.

our governors to abridge us of any liberty which we fancy we have a right to exercise, we are however well contented, that they should tie up their own hands from prejudicing us. Not indeed that a restraint in this instance would really and upon the whole be detrimental to the landed interest'. I could wish therefore, that at least in every bill of inclosure, of which I am glad to see such numbers constantly before the House of Commons, a clause was added, by way of direction to the commissioners, to lay out the inclosed lands into farms, not exceeding two or three hundred acres at most.

The proprietors of land cannot more fatally mistake their real and permanent interest, than by consulting merely the interest of the hour. As the value of lands has been raised, and could alone be raised by industry and populousness, that is, by commerce and manufactures, so can it only be supported by them. Such is the necessary and inevitable course of things. The rent of lands must fall as the demand for their produce lessens. No human art or power can prevent this effect. Every assistance therefore which the landed interest can give to the body of the people, either by imparting to them a greater plenty of the necessaries of life, or taking off any of those burthens which enhance their price, will infallibly turn out to its own advantage. And it will as certainly feel in the end every evil which the people are made to suffer.

[117]

OF INCLOSURES.

Intimated my sentiments with regard to inclosures at the end of the last chapter. The public approbation of this practice, as well as the general experience of its utility, would perhaps sufficiently justify my farther silence with regard to it. But as objections are frequently thrown out against this method of improvement, and some too of a very plausible appearance, it will not be amiss to examine briefly, what real weight there may be in them.

Inclosures are of two kinds; either of common fields, which are in constant tillage, or of common pasture and waste lands, which have been never ploughed. They are indeed generally both carried on together in the same plan of inclosure, and are then always an advantage to each other.

The general objections to the inclosure of common fields are, that it tends to diminish the growth of corn, throws the lands when thus parcelled out into fewer hands, and renders a lesser quantity of labour necessary to the management of them. Circumstances these, which, it is urged, inevitably tend to depopulation and

wretchedness. I know myself a gentleman, with whom these objections have invincible weight; who would not on any account consent to the inclosure of the common fields in the parish where he resides; because, says he, instead of twenty farmers who now live with comfort around me, I should at the most have five great ones. And the number of labourers too would be considerably diminished, though not perhaps in the same proportion.

Before we consider the force of these objections, it will be necessary to state those made against inclosures of the other kind; as these several objections will happily be found to take off the edge from each other.

It is urged against the inclosure of commons, &c. that the quantity of pasturage is diminished by this practice; that the number of cattle must of consequence be lessened in the same proportion; and that, the heath and waste lands being in general stocked with young cattle, the inclosure of these strikes at the very root of their plenty. And it is farther objected in many instances, that the poor cottagers, who have a right of commoning, are hereby deprived of a kind of property which long possession has endeared to them, which is in fact extremely conducive to their subsistence, and in some degree also beneficial to the public.

It seems to be admitted on all hands, that the produce in both these instances is increased upon the whole. A circumstance of undoubted advantage in most cases to all who have any interest in such lands; to the proprietor, to the occupier, and to the public. To the public this seems to be of advantage in all cases; to the owner and occupier, in proportion as the advanced profit comes to them clear of the several expences in procuring it.

The
 * A question has arisen upon this subject, whether the gross produce of lands upon the whole, or the nett produce after deducting all the expences which attend it, is to be considered as advantageous to the public. With respect either to the proprietor or the farmer, the nett produce will be alone attended to. The question therefore is in fact matter of speculation entirely. And the determination of it either way will not have the least effect upon practice. For certainly no improvements will be made, except where there is a prospect of advantage to those who make them. The most fertile lands will lie in a state of absolute barrenness, where there is not sufficient vent for their produce to balance the expence of growing it. The question however itself is not chimerical; because there are a thousand supposable instances, in which the real gross produce may be greater, and the nett produce less. It seems indeed to be a question of the same kind with that in a former chapter relating to machines and other contrivances for lessening the quantity of labour; and is resolvable in much the same way; from the particular circumstances of the case. In a country abounding with manufactures, and carrying on a brisk commerce, such as is England, the nett produce seems to be the principal circumstance of utility. As long as these advantages

The objections however made to the first kind of inclosures would be undoubtedly of great weight, supposing none but tillage lands be inclosed. Though the produce of some kind or other would perhaps be increased upon the whole, and the nett produce very considerably, it might remain matter of some doubt, whether these advantages would in a public view counterbalance the great evils of depopulation, and decrease of labour. But in a country full of trade and manufactures this evil is perhaps more in appearance than reality. The hands spared by these improvements are not thrown upon the public, but may be employed in a manner equally beneficial to it, and themselves. They are in this view also a stock of labour laid up for the use of the state upon particular occasions. Its fleets and its armies can alone be recruited from these remain with us, our hands will not be unemployed. Here therefore whatever tends to lessen the quantity of labour in the cultivation of lands, and in consequence to advance, not so much the gross as, the nett produce, seems rather to merit attention. In a country which has little manufacture or commerce, such as Switzerland, the gross produce is chiefly to be considered. The more hands employed in procuring it the better; supposing a sufficient quantity is procured for the support of them. Yet, after all, I cannot but think, that an increase of useful produce is in all cases of public advantage; that it is the principal object which the public ought to have in view; leaving entirely the circumstance of nett produce to those whom it concerns; and who will, no doubt, be sufficiently attentive to it.

super-

supernumerary hands. Not that I think these or any circumstances sufficient to counterbalance any considerable injury done to tillage'. But I do

We find in the history of our own country frequent complaints of the decrease of tillage. And this grievance is constantly ascribed to the practice of inclosures. In the reign of Edward the sixth particularly these clamours were carried to a great height. From the late great revolution of property there arose as great a change in the management of it. Private persons were naturally led to make the most of the estates which fell into their hands. From the great demand for wool both at home and abroad pasturage was found more profitable than that wretched kind of tillage which was then practised. The proprietors in consequence converted great part of their lands to this use. Many of the common fields which had been usually in tillage were inclosed for this purpose. The numerous tenants which before occupied them were dismissed; and no regard paid to the rights of the poor cottagers. These were, no doubt, real grievances. And men looked no farther than the immediate causes of them. Inclosures they saw were necessary to pasturage. The whole force of their opposition was therefore levelled against these. They reflected not, that the true cause of their grievances lay one remove farther back: that the evils of which they complained were really owing to the want of sufficient encouragement to tillage; whereas the markets were open, and the demand great for the produce from pasturage. There is indeed no possibility of arguing from those times to the present. The art of agriculture was then absolutely unknown. And men were entirely strangers to that beautiful connection which nature has established between the several branches of it, but which art, founded upon experience, can alone improve and perfect. The effects of commerce upon agriculture were also

do not conceive, that there would be in fact less tillage upon the whole and in the course of a few years after inclosure, than while the fields remained in their open state. The work would only be carried on more commodiously, and with less expence of hands. The county of Essex is for the most part inclosed, and yet abounds with corn. But there is happily no kind of necessity for disputing this matter. We very seldom see a bill before the House for the inclosure of arable lands only. And I do not recollect, that I ever observed a single instance of it. They are generally for lands of both kinds; and are then attended with every advantage. The produce upon the whole is prodigiously increased; the nett produce most certainly not less so; the quantity of labour also from the additional quantity of lands in tillage, I should imagine, would be considerably greater; and supposing the lands to be divided into farms of one, two, or three hundred little observed and understood. If husbandmen, says Mr. Hume, understand agriculture, and have a ready vent for their commodities, we need never dread a diminution of the people, employed in the country. All methods of supporting populousness, except by the interest of the proprietors, are violent and ineffectual. During a century and a half after this period (the reign of Henry the seventh) there was a continual renewal of laws and edicts against depopulation; whence we may infer, that none of them were ever executed. The natural course of improvement at last provided a remedy. History of England, vol. iii. p. 65. 2d edit.

dred

ded acres, as circumstances would admit, every advantage might be obtained, and every inconvenience avoided; the business of the country would go on with infinite facility in all its branches, and be attended with ample profit. And indeed I have not observed, that in those parishes, where the fields are still in common, the farmers in general live either comfortably or happily. The greatest part of them maintain themselves but poorly, even in times most favourable to this business. And the intermixture of their several lands, together with the right of common annexed to them, is the source of eternal wrangling and clamour amongst them.

It is objected, on the other side, that by inclosing and breaking up common heath and waste lands pasturage is diminished, and that the breed of cattle must in consequence suffer. I take the fact to be just the reverse. The pasturage, by which I understand food of all kinds for cattle, is far from being lessened even in this instance. The crops of artificial grass, whether of clover or other kinds, of turnips, of grain for cattle, and the straw arising from such grain, will abundantly compensate the loss of that poor pasturage, which common and waste lands generally afford, and which is of little value more than four or five months in the year. And if we take into the account the prodigious increase of pasturage and fodder of all kinds from the
inclosure

inclosure of common arable lands, the thing is put out of all possible dispute. But the breed of cattle is, it seems, hurt in its very source by this rage of inclosing. That the breed of cattle is essentially hurt in some way or other is but too true. The particular causes of this will be enquired into hereafter. But inclosure, I think, is not amongst the number of them. For the objection in fact amounts to no more than this. That by inclosing heaths, commons, &c. we make those lands, which were before fit for little else but running young cattle, now useful to many other purposes. We do not, I think, destroy this original application of them. For why not breed cattle upon inclosed and improved lands, as well as upon rough and open ground? If there be not, I mean, a sufficient quantity of the latter? The farmer will certainly do this, as soon as it is his interest to do it. And it would very soon become his interest, had he not other, and shorter, and more profitable methods of disposing of his hay, and oats, and whatever else is grown for the support of live stock. But it is not yet time to enter fully into this matter.

The last objection is of a kind, which, I confess, will always have the greatest weight with me. I would not propose to injure a poor cottager, though to fill the coffers of the nation. I would, if possible, gratify his prejudices; the innocent prejudices of simplicity, and ignorance.

But

But here surely there need not be the shadow of injury. The loss of the most inconsiderable advantage may be fully compensated; and ought to be doubly, and trebly compensated. And it should be an everlasting rule in all provisions of this kind, to take the greatest care of the smallest interest. An acre or two of land near the respective cottages would certainly answer all these purposes. And I should think it no difficult matter to engage the full consent of their inhabitants to such an exchange'. The supposed public good arising from those inconsiderable rights in the hands of cottagers is surely not worth attending to. It would indeed be abundantly compensated by the extraordinary produce of such a small spot of ground as I could wish to see always allotted to these poor people, in lieu of the privileges which they give up; and which they would have every motive to cultivate and improve to the utmost.

The object of this enquiry is utility, solely; and, as far as possible, general utility. I regard not therefore objections that may come from any other quarter; nor permit myself to consider, whether an inclosed or open country be most favourable to the chase, or field amusements of any kind.

I am very sorry to find upon enquiry, that in general very little regard is paid to these rights of poor cottagers in bills of inclosure.

The

The improvement of lands by inclosure unavoidably directs our view to an object worthy the attention of an enlightened and public-spirited administration. I scruple not to assert, that agriculture is the true basis of all our present wealth and power. It is always the best foundation of public prosperity, where it can be had; and, if neglected, admits of no substitute comparable to it. A vigorous commerce acting upon an extended agriculture will be the unfailing source of plenty of every kind. This base cannot possibly be too much enlarged. I could wish therefore to see every inch of royal forest and chase land in the kingdom make a part of it. This would be a gift indeed to the public: a gift worthy the parent of his people. One large tract of land particularly marks itself out for this purpose: a tract, once full of inhabitants, but depopulated, and laid waste by a savage conqueror; gratifying thereby a spirit of wanton cruelty, and a vain love of amusement. I could dwell with delight upon the happy train of consequences which would be incessantly arising from so noble an undertaking. But they may be sufficiently collected from what has been already said upon these subjects, and indeed are obvious to every impartial eye. I shall only add, that the legislature has it in its power, in the

The New Forest in Hampshire.

execution

execution of such a design, to set the nation an example of the most perfect plan of agriculture; and may, by a proper division and allotment of the lands, ensure the greatest possible advantage both to the farmer, and the public.

But I cannot suppress one objection that may possibly be made to this measure: an objection, which however, I hope, the most interested would blush to avow. And it is too an objection, which must bear equally hard upon all improvements of land whatever. It is said, that a measure of this kind would greatly sink the value of lands in general, and of those particularly which are already in their highest state of cultivation. But

I main-

A similar sentiment is very apt to arise in our minds, upon observing improvements of any kind in neighbouring kingdoms; and especially in those branches where they seem to rival us. But surely there cannot be a more narrow, not to say malevolent, way of thinking. A commercial state draws advantages to itself from every advantage of every other nation. In this view the whole world are its subjects. And England has no more to fear from any improvements in other countries, than Essex from an inclosure in Yorkshire. Almost every country differs physically in many respects from every other country; and has in consequence its different productions, first of nature, and afterwards of art. And it is from the free and unlimited communication of these, that the several nations of the earth may derive constant supplies of support and enjoyment from each other. In the case indeed of rival productions, there seems to be at the first view an opposition of interests. But any evil, in consequence of this opposition, must arise from something wrong

I maintain first, that this would not be the consequence: secondly, that supposing it to be so,

wrong in that country, which finds itself hurt by it. Every country has its staple: that is, has its particular productions, which it can bring to a market upon better terms than any other country. If it loses these advantages, the blame ought to be laid upon itself, and its own mismanagement; not upon the greater industry, the superior skill, or the better policy of other nations. Prohibitions and a forced trade are but a poor substitute for the loss of these advantages. Not to mention, that were the world civilized and peopled in any degree it is capable of, there would be no fear of a market for the productions of every country. Let us but steadily adhere to our own proper and natural business at home, and we shall have no occasion either to envy or to fear any advantages or improvements in the nations around us. The more they flourish, perhaps the better for us. I could wish to see all the nations of Europe intermixed as one people; all equally flourishing according to the different advantages which nature has given them; and united by the strongest ties of mutual intercourse and commerce. How odious the narrow maxims adopted in this respect both by England and France. The commerce between the two nations is so much shackled with prohibitions, imposts, and whatever else is invidious, and abhorrent from a true spirit of communication, that an eternal jealousy must reign between them, and they can scarce at any time be said to be at perfect peace with each other. It always gives me pain to observe such confined and unbenevolent sentiments in any of my countrymen. As a man, I wish every blessing to the French. And as an Englishman, I am sorry to see any jealousy of that nation, if only for this reason, because there is always some degree of fear at the bottom of jealousy. See this subject thoroughly exhausted in Mr. Hume's Essay upon the Jealousy of Trade.

the evil arising from it would be more in appearance than reality: and thirdly, that it is a consequence of no consideration, when opposed to an object of general utility.

As to the first point, I would ask. Has this been in fact the consequence of those vast improvements upon land, which have been lately made in this kingdom? Has this been the consequence in general? Or has it been so in particular instances? All the world knows the contrary. Rents have advanced universally. And we do not find, that those even of our meadow lands have sunk, from the late immense accession of artificial pasturage. But it is said, they would have been prodigiously higher, had there not been such an accession. And just the same might be said in favour of the most pernicious monopoly, that ever was established or attempted. But in the present instance, I believe, this would not have been the fact; because an increase of demand will generally follow an increase of the commodity. They will be always found to operate reciprocally upon each other. Wherever there is consumption, you will be sure to find consumers. Your people will constantly multiply with the means of supporting them*. Not to mention, that the whole

* I always suppose, that there is no disease in the constitution, destructive of this natural progress. A full and secure enjoyment of liberty and property is at least as necessary

whole world are consumers to the British nation.

But secondly I maintain, that supposing this to be the consequence, the evil would be more in appearance than reality. A fall of rents, it is supposed, would necessarily follow an increase of produce. But would not the owners of land be at least equally benefited by such an increase with the rest of the people? More so indeed, as their consumption is in general greater. Whatever they purchased would be at an easier rate. The wages of their servants and labourers of all kinds would be lower. All these advantages would generally precede the fall of rents. But they would be benefited still more in another way. The burthens upon the land would be lessened; some immediately, others after things were a little settled in their natural course. The to the prosperity of a state, and the increase of its people, as plenty of subsistence for them. It is indeed essentially necessary to the production of plenty itself.

The contrary circumstances always precede the rise of rents. The farmers will not give an advanced price for their lands, till they are secure of making an advanced price of the produce of them. The landed interest therefore is not, I think, in this way chargeable with having contributed in any degree to the present grievance. It would indeed be justly and shamefully charged with this, if it gave the least check to farther improvements, and a still greater increase of produce, from the apprehension of a fall of rents in consequence of it.

number of poor would infallibly decrease from many causes. This would in all probability be the immediate consequence of an increase of produce; and would also precede the fall of rents. The revenue would also gain in a like proportion. It would be necessarily increased by an increase of people, that is, of consumption. A few thousands also might, from so large an accession of private property, be added to the land-tax. This would put it in the power of the legislature to take off a part of that burthen, as it at present stands; and must, or at least might be made to operate in some way or other to the diminution of taxes, and the ease of the lands. Whoever looks at all beyond the surface must see this to be the necessary course of things.

Thirdly, I maintain, that this is a consequence of no consideration, when put in the scale against an object of general utility. The single question is this. Do we in fact enjoy the blessings of plenty or no? Are provisions and other necessaries of life as cheap as they ought to be? Can our manufacturers send their goods to foreign markets with such a degree of profit, as will enable them to carry them on with spirit? As will enable them to pay their workmen wages in proportion to the price of every thing necessary to their subsistence? Are they not undersold every where? And do not some of the most valuable branches of our manufacture subsist by means of a forced trade

merely? And are the cries of the poor, and the complaints of all, except the very rich, really without foundation? These questions, I fear, need no answer. The evil shews itself every where, past a possibility of doubt. It can neither be mistaken, nor be smothered. I say not, that an increase of produce from this, or any other cause, would entirely remove the calamity. I am persuaded to the contrary. The wound, it is to be feared, lies much deeper. But it would certainly afford some present relief, or at least some prospect of relief, and would probably palliate, if not effectually cure, the disease. Let not then the very lowest whisper of private interest be heard upon such an occasion.

Before I quit this subject of land-improvements, I would add a word or two upon that of tithes, which have been justly esteemed unfavourable to them. I mean not to say a syllable with respect to the property of tithes. They are a real, landed property, and stand undoubtedly upon as good a foundation as any other interest in land. But I could wish to see them absolutely extinguished, wherever it can be done with the full consent of all parties; and never in any case increased. An allotment

The hint of tithes was, no doubt, taken from the Mosaic appointment of them. But surely no part of the Jewish polity, equally singular in its origin and its object, can possibly be considered as an example of legislation to any other kingdom. See an account of the many difficulties which attended

OF INCLOSURES. 133

allotment of property this equally inconvenient both to the payer and to the receiver : the source of endless contention between those who ought, from their relation to each other, to dwell together in the most perfect unity : and also detrimental to the public ; as it may in many instances, where tithes are taken in kind, be an obstacle to valuable improvements. For it is well known, that the tithe of lands is a tenth part of their full produce, without any regard to the expence attending its growth. The proprietor therefore or the farmer, in calculating his nett profit from any proposed improvement, must in consequence throw a tenth of the clear produce quite out of the question. I wish therefore to see, in all acts of parliament for the inclosure of lands subject to tithes, a direction to allot a parcel of lands in lieu of such tithes. And if inclosures of a nobler kind were ever to take place, I should hope the same measures would be pursued ; if any allotment for the maintenance of additional parochial ministers should, as it undoubtedly would, be thought necessary.

attended the establishment of tithes by Charlemagne, and of the wretched shifts which the ecclesiastics were obliged to have recourse to for this purpose. *De l'Esprit des Loix*, liv. xxxi. ch. 12.

same manner as before. In the other way, the miller purchases his wheat in large quantities of the farmer, considers himself as manufacturer of this grain, as the master does of barley, sell his flour to the baker, from whom the consumer is at once supplied with

OF BREAD.

WHEAT, before it becomes fit for consumption, passes through two hands, the miller's and the baker's. Let us examine, in what manner its price may be affected in the course of this its necessary passage from the grower to the consumer.

It is obvious, that the quicker the passage of any commodity is from its first origin, the earth, to its consumption, the cheaper it must in consequence come to the consumer. Every addition of labour expended upon it adds proportionably to its value, and if the labour be bestowed by several different hands, the commodity will commonly receive a still higher value, than if the same quantity of labour was expended upon it by one person only. Thus, in the instance before us, both the miller and the baker must and will have their profit; which profit is unavoidably drawn from the consumer.

There are evidently two ways in which these intermediate hands may be made to receive this profit. The consumer may buy wheat at the first hand from the farmer, pay the miller at a fixed rate for grinding, may afterwards prepare it himself for the oven, and pay the baker in the same

same manner as before the miller. In the other way, the miller purchases his wheat in large quantities of the farmer, considers himself as a manufacturer of this grain, as the malster does of barley, sells his flour to the baker, from whom the consumer is at once supplied with bread.

The former method is evidently the most advantageous to the consumer, that is, to the whole body of the people. The miller and the baker are considered in this way as little other than labourers paid for their work, not as merchants or traders. They are neither buyers nor sellers; and therefore there need no allowance be made them on account of stock, or capital employed in their business. And such was undoubtedly the earliest practice in this kingdom; though perhaps never the universal practice. By a very old statute the miller's toll is fixed at a twentieth or in some cases at a twenty-fourth of what he grinds². And the miller probably concerned himself no farther. It appears however, that meal was actually sold at this time by some one or other, as well as wheat³. For we find a statute

▪ Or the baker may buy the wheat, and pay the miller for grinding. This will amount to the same with respect to the consumer.

² Supposed Hen. 3.

³ This might have been done several ways. The miller himself might sell meal. Part of his toll he undoubtedly

tute of the same date with the former, which severely punishes the seller of adulterated meal. These meal-men however were not probably very numerous; were perhaps confined to the capital, and other large and busy towns. Here the inhabitants engaged in other employments, and also quite out of the reach of mills, which are necessarily at some distance from towns, could not with any convenience attend to this business. But what inclines me to think, that this practice was thus limited is, that we find no subsequent regulations of it in our statute book till very late reigns. And we know indeed, that it has been the general practice in the country till within a few years, for the miller to fetch his grists from house to house, and return them in the same

fold. Or there may have been a set of men between the miller and the baker, like our meal-men. Or the baker might sell a little meal, as well as bread. He might buy his wheat of the farmer, and pay the miller for grinding. This, we know, was the common practice within a few years: before the millers outstripped the bakers, and were become merchants.

* Si quis præsumat vendere farinam ante sophisticatam aut alio modo fallacem primo graviter puniatur secundo convictus amittat totam farinam tertio subeat judicium pilloriæ & aburet villam. In the margin we see, instead of the word ante, perhaps avenæ. If this last be the true reading, the statute proves nothing, but with regard to oat-meal. And I am rather inclined to think it is, because I should hardly suppose the practice of selling meal from corn in general to have been so common at that time, as to require a law for the regulation of it.

manner

manner, when reduced to meal. A practice, I imagine, not yet abolished in many places.

Much the same may be said with regard to the baker. We find in a statute of nearly the same date with the former an assize of bread for sale recognized and appealed to.¹ But here, as in the former case, we do not find, that the legislature thought proper to interpose for a long series of years (in the course of which one would imagine many alterations in the assize must have been necessary) because, doubtless, the general practice did not run in this channel. The other method has indeed almost universally obtained till within a few years, unless in places of great concourse and business; nor is it entirely dropped any where.

I have mentioned these particulars, seemingly of little consequence at present, in order to shew the expediency of keeping up or reviving the old practice in both these instances, where circumstances will admit of it.² For could it not be shewn

¹ Called 51, Hen. 3.

² I have been informed, that the manufacturers and other principal inhabitants of Wolverhampton are so sensible of this, that they have lately built by subscription a corn mill for the use of the poor only. They find by their calculations, that they can pay themselves fair interest for their money, and at the same time make a very considerable saving to the poor. This account was given me by a subscriber. I could wish to see trials of this kind made in other manufacturing and populous towns. Why might not also the same method be extended to bake-houses?

in detail, as I have no doubt but it abundantly can, that in this method bread comes with less expence to the consumer, and consequently at an easier rate to the poor, the fortunes made by the intermediate trades are an ample demonstration of it. Millers have indeed within a few years raised immense fortunes, and with incredible expedition; and bakers in general thrive and get rich in a proportion far beyond what is seen in other trades, that fairly rank with them. But the riches of both these are drawn from the general body of the people. They can be drawn from no other source. Whatever restraints therefore can fairly be laid upon their profits must inevitably be so much saved to the community.

Circumstances, I am well satisfied, will not admit the suppression of these trades; particularly, in busy and populous towns. Let us then examine, whether it be not possible to prevent the abuses of them, and even to make them contribute to the good of the public.

I have already declared myself an enemy to compulsory laws. They are never to be advised, but in cases of extreme necessity. I would always chuse to tempt, rather than press men into the service of the public. But there seems to be something in the very nature of these trades, which requires positive and absolute restrictions. The commodity itself is the first and most essen-

The London bakers particularly.

tial necessary of life. Every avenue therefore ought, if possible, to be shut up against fraud and imposition in the dispensing of it. Let articles of a superfluous or a luxurious nature take their chance in trade. Let it be the purchaser's care to inform himself sufficiently before he hazards his money. It is his own voluntary act. And there will be no great harm done, if he be over-reached a little, and imposed upon. But in articles of universal and indispensable necessity the case is widely different. Every mortal, the very poorest must buy bread, and must buy it almost daily. Fraud here is equally odious and pernicious, equally infamous and inhuman. It ought therefore to be guarded against by every possible provision. And in this view the legislature has clearly considered this as well as other articles of universal consumption; and has thought it necessary to shew a severity, of which it is extremely reserved in cases of a less important nature.

It is moreover a commodity, particularly open to fraudulent and unfair practice. Another

The emperor, who caused a baker, convicted of fraud in his business, to be impaled, undoubtedly seized the true spirit of the crime; though the punishment was beyond all kind of measure severe and cruel. For a fraud of this nature is not merely a violation of police; the only light in which the President Montesquieu seems to have seen it; (*De l'Esprit des Loix*, liv. xxvi. ch. 25.) but it is a species of treason against the public, against the whole body of the people,

circum-

circumstance which requires a more than common attention and caution with regard to it. The miller may adulterate; and so may the baker. The price of meal and flour is in great measure in the hands of the miller; and the weight of bread entirely at the mercy of the baker. They have naturally no other restraint, but that which is common to all trades: the hazard of not selling their goods, if they are not of equal quality with the common run of such goods; and the obligation of selling them at a market price. And this is a sufficient restraint, where, on the one hand, a market price is fairly settled, and, on the other, there is little room for deception either in the quality or quantity of the commodity. But the cases before us plainly need a still farther restraint, if such can be found out. We have not, I fear, an open market for flour. In the country it is in the hands of a few millers; who have it now and then in their power to make an arbitrary advance upon the price; and are without a check in it, at least for some time*. The London market is, I imagine, a more open one. And no doubt the price

* But what shall we say to mills held under the crown, and claiming an exclusive right to grind wheat and malt within a certain district? Ought such a monopoly to exist a moment in a free country? If the right, as it now stands, be really legal, ought not the legislature at once to extinguish it? To purchase at least the proprietor's interest, if it appears that he has any fair one, for the benefit of the public?

settled

settled there will after a little time operate towards settling that of the country. But still in this interval great mischief may be done. With respect to bread the thing is much clearer. The baker, if under no restraint as to weight, will have great scope for imposition; and, if he is a tolerable manager, may go on a great while without any discovery to his prejudice*.

But it is time to see, what provisions the legislature has made against these mischiefs; and whether it has done all that can be done in this important matter. The law against adulteration, whether by the miller, or the baker, is, I think, as strong and as full as it can be put; and the penalties are sufficiently severe. But still, it is to be feared, it has not its full effect. The veriest bungler in these trades may continually break this law, without the least danger of a discovery. But as a fraud of this nature cannot be well carried on by a single person only, without the concurrence, or knowledge at least of servants, would not some reward for the discovery of such offence be a means of preventing it?

* Especially where the amze of bread is set by the price of flour.

† Upon second thoughts, I do not see that he could go on long in this way with success: unless indeed in case of a monopoly, or a combination among the bakers. Every man may judge both of the quantity and quality of his bread; and will of course go to the best shop, if he has any choice.

‡ Laws are but bad expedients to make men really honest. Their object should always be, to make it, as much as possible, their interest to be so.

With

With respect to the price of his goods the miller is still left by the law entirely at liberty. But is there no possibility of laying some restraint upon him here, without doing essential mischief in any other way? Is it not possible to govern the price of flour by that of wheat? I have known at sometimes rather too wide a gap between them¹. The price of flour is, I think, naturally governed by that of wheat. Not perhaps absolutely so, and at all times; because the machine is sometimes rendered incapable of doing its work by unavoidable accident; by too much, or too little wind; by want of water, or too great an abundance of it. But these circumstances cannot be of any long continuance, and may be hazarded without danger of any great prejudice to the miller². I speak with the utmost hesitation and tenderness upon this

* I have of late often heard complaints from those who continue the practice of making their own bread, that they cannot buy their wheat, as usual, of the farmer, but are obliged to buy their flour at the worst hand, meaning of the miller.

* It has been said in objection to this method, that wheat yields very differently at different times, and that therefore the price of flour cannot fairly be governed by it. But could not the thing be settled by weight, if not by measure? At the worst, however, the miller will have his fair chance for profit. If he gains less when wheat yields ill, he will be a greater gainer when the produce of flour from it is greater. I do not however declare myself an advocate for this method of ascertaining the price of flour, if only because a similar plan with regard to bread does not seem to succeed so well with us as could be wished.

point

point, because I am well satisfied of its great delicacy, and of the great attention, discernment, and impartiality necessary to form effectual regulations, and plan a fair table of assize for this purpose. A single false step must make the remedy infinitely worse than the disease. One principle ought invariably to govern all regulations of this kind: viz. that the profits of the trade should be made to decrease, as the price of the commodity advances. Its profits, I mean, upon the whole, and with respect to all the circumstances of the business. Let the miller be enabled to live by his trade at all times. But let him thrive only in times of public plenty. Let him rejoice with those that rejoice. But let it not be in his power to amass wealth amidst the necessities and distresses of his country.

A regulation of this kind has always obtained with respect to the baker; and assize tables are established by law for fixing the respective weight and price of bread. But are these tables in their most perfect state? Are they founded upon the enlarged social principle, so often mentioned, uniting private and public interest by an indissoluble bond, and never consulting the former, but as a means of promoting the latter. If there be any material defect in these regulations, they must necessarily be productive of much greater evil than good.

The first circumstance which struck me upon looking into these tables was the gradual advance of the baker's profit (if he has in fact any profit

over

over and above the allowance for baking by the magistrate) upon every advance of the price of wheat. The following extract from the assize table established by 31 Geo. 2. will shew us what that is.

Price of the bushel of wheat with the allowance for baking.	Price of the peck loaf wheaten.
s. 3	s. d. 1 : 1 $\frac{3}{4}$
4	1 : 6 $\frac{1}{4}$
5	1 : 11
6	2 : 3 $\frac{1}{2}$
7	2 : 8
8	3 : 0
9	3 : 5
10	3 : 10
11	4 : 2
12	4 : 7
13	4 : 11 $\frac{1}{2}$
14	5 : 4

In this extract from the table we see, that the price of the peck loaf advances in exact proportion

tion to the advance of the price of the bushel of wheat. It is double when wheat is at six shillings the bushel to what it is when at three, nearly treble when at nine; and exactly four times as much when at twelve.

The first question to be determined is, whether the baker has in fact any profit at all by these regulations, over and above his allowance for the trouble and expence of baking, to be fixed by the magistrate according to circumstances. From whence will arise a second question, whether this ought to be, as it certainly is, a continually increasing profit. If the baker, according to the affize table, makes no more upon an average of a bushel of wheat made into bread than the price of the wheat, the magistrate's allowance for baking, and any other necessary expence attending it, all is well. But if he has any profit besides this, it seems to be more than the law has designed to give him. It is at least more than the law has declared any design of giving him; and is, as I observed, a perpetually increasing profit. According to the best information I can procure, a bushel of wheat will upon an average produce three pecks, that is forty-two pounds, of that flour, with which the baker makes, or is supposed at least to make, his wheaten bread. The only expence attending the reduction of this wheat to bread, except that for which he is allowed by the magistrate, is that of grinding and

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dressing

dressling it. This expence, I have been informed, will at one time with another be nearly if not quite balanced by the value of the bran, and whatever else remains after the flour is taken from the meal. Whether it be so or no, must be well known; though I pretend not to determine. Let us now see then the amount of the respective prices of three peck loaves according to the foregoing extract; by subtracting from which the several prices of wheat, (including the magistrate's allowance) as in the table, will be shewn at once what is received by the baker, for the expence of grinding, &c. according to the several prices of the bushel of wheat'.

I cannot absolutely determine, whether the statute intended to include the expence of grinding and dressing in the magistrate's allowance; as the former particularly is not a part of the baker's business. But surely this ought not to be less ambiguous. The magistrate ought to know with certainty, whether this, or any other expence is considered in the table, or whether he is to include it in the allowance. How else can he possibly fix his allowance? I have all along supposed this expence to have been considered in the table. I would also observe, that I do not speak positively, and from my own knowledge, as to the quantity of flour arising from a bushel of wheat. I am only answerable for the reasoning; which will be equally just, whether the fact be true or false.

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The price of the bushel of wheat with the allow- ance.	Price of the peck loaf wheat.	Price of three peck loaves ditto.	Remainder af- ter subtract- ing the 1st co- lumn from the 3d.
s.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
3	1 : 1 $\frac{3}{4}$	3 : 5 $\frac{1}{4}$	0 : 5 $\frac{1}{4}$
4	1 : 6 $\frac{1}{4}$	4 : 6 $\frac{3}{4}$	0 : 6 $\frac{3}{4}$
5	1 : 11	5 : 9	0 : 9
6	2 : 3 $\frac{1}{2}$	6 : 10 $\frac{1}{2}$	0 : 10 $\frac{1}{2}$
7	2 : 8	8 : 0	1 : 0
8	3 : 0	9 : 0	1 : 0
9	3 : 5	10 : 3	1 : 3
10	3 : 10	11 : 6	1 : 6
11	4 : 2	12 : 6	1 : 6
12	4 : 7	13 : 9	1 : 9
13	4 : 11 $\frac{1}{2}$	14 : 10 $\frac{1}{2}$	1 : 10 $\frac{1}{2}$
14	5 : 4	16 : 0	2 : 0

The fact then clearly shews itself. If our in-formation be right with respect to the quantity of flour produced by a bushel of wheat, it ap-pears, that the overplus to the baker, after being paid for his wheat, and for the trouble and ex-pence of baking, is at the lowest price of wheat

in the table five-pence farthing, at the highest two shillings; besides the bran and other refuse. It is not indeed likely, that wheat should be ever at either of these extremes. It will generally be fluctuating between five shillings and ten shillings (allowance included) and in consequence this overplus will not be less than nine-pence, nor more than one shilling and six-pence. I do not determine positively, whether this overplus, or rather the average overplus between the two, be a fair allowance. I have been told indeed, that the baker is not satisfied, unless he has two shillings and six-pence average profit upon a bushel of wheat made into bread. But I am confident, that any private person may make this quantity of bread at little more than a third part of this expence. He will get his wheat ground for four-pence, his three peck loaves baked for three-pence', and his yeast and salt will at an average cost him not more than four-pence halfpenny, so that his expences will be eleven-pence halfpenny in the whole. And he will have the bran and other refuse for his trouble.

The next question to be considered is, whether this overplus ought to be continually increasing with the advance of wheat. I think, it certainly ought not. If the miller indeed be paid in kind

We are to suppose the miller and baker sufficiently paid by these sums. Otherwise they would undoubtedly charge more.

for

for grinding, this proportionable advance is fair and just on the side of the baker. Because he loses the same quantity of meal at all times ; but which is of greater or less value according to the price of wheat. Here the advance of profit goes to the miller ; who, when wheat is at double price, has double pay for the same work. But on the other hand, if the baker pays the miller at a fixed rate in money for grinding ; the whole overplus goes into the pocket of the former. At any rate either the miller or the baker has this continual advance of profit, or, what I suppose to be the fact, it is shared between them. But, I believe, the most common practice at present is, for the baker to buy his flour at once of the miller. This manner of putting it will amount to the very same. If the miller has a double profit upon the same quantity of flour when wheat is at a double price, this brings it to the case of his taking toll, that is, a certain and fixed quantity of meal at all times for grinding ; and the miller is the only gainer. Whatever less profit he is contented with remains with the baker. In all cases the consumer pays this advanced profit with the advanced price of wheat. But for what reason should he pay such advance at a time when he can least afford it ? If the miller grinds a somewhat less quantity of wheat, and the baker sells less bread at a dear time, (though, I imagine, there is no vast difference in the home con-

sumption of this article, unless wheat be extravagantly dear indeed) it is the misfortune of the times, a misfortune which they should submit to, and be obliged to share with the rest of the community.

If indeed it were necessary to make any difference in the allowance for the whole trouble and expence of preparing wheat for consumption at different times, it should in my opinion be greatest when wheat is at the lowest price; because a small advance of profit would be then less felt by the public. But indeed I see no great reason for making any such difference. Let the gross allowance when wheat is cheap be such as will enable these trades to thrive in the degree necessary to balance the decrease of their business, which will probably be occasioned by the higher price of the commodity in which they deal. In this case there will be no reason for complaint on either side. I am indeed far from meaning any harm either to the miller or the baker. They are of that rank, which is, in my estimation, the most useful to the community. I would allow them therefore every convenience which fairly belongs to their station. Nay, I would have them thrive and prosper. But I would have them thrive only, when their country prospers: not grow rich, while the people are starving: not be like the locusts, "to eat up that little which the hail
" has left."

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I have endeavoured to search this matter to the bottom, and from the best information I could procure, as well for the satisfaction of the miller and the baker, as of the general body of the consumers; amongst whom there seems to be an universal discontent. But in order to make myself perfectly understood, I shall subjoin a specimen of an affize table, constructed upon the principle of an equal overplus at all prices of wheat. And for the greater ease of calculation, I shall put this overplus at six-pence, by no means determining whether this be the proper and reasonable allowance or no; or whether any overplus at all ought in justice to be expected from the consumer; or whether the whole be not better left to the discretion of the magistrate.

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Price

Price of the bushel of wheat with the allow- ance for baking.	Price of the peck loaf wheaten.	Price of three peck loaves ditto.	Overplus allowance for grind- ing, &c.
s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	d.
3	1 : 2	3 : 6	6
4	1 : 6	4 : 6	6
5	1 : 10	5 : 6	6
6	2 : 2	6 : 6	6
7	2 : 6	7 : 6	6
8	2 : 10	8 : 6	6
9	3 : 2	9 : 6	6
10	3 : 6	10 : 6	6
11	3 : 10	11 : 6	6
12	4 : 2	12 : 6	6
13	4 : 6	13 : 6	6
14	4 : 10	14 : 6	6

I have already observed, that in these calculations, and in the reasoning upon them, I assume as a fact, that a bushel of wheat will produce upon an average three pecks of such flour as is used in making wheaten bread. If it produces more upon an average,

average, the baker is a proportionably greater gainer, and that too at every advance in the table; if less, his profit will be in the same degree diminished. And here it may not be improper to remark, that, according to the present rule of assize, the profit of the baker may be very different, when the assized price of wheat is the same. For he buys by weight, and he sells by measure¹. When the bushel of wheat by measure exceeds that by weight, that is, when wheat yields well, as it is called, his profit will be greater; when the bushel by measure comes not up to the standard or average weight, or when it yields ill, it will be proportionably less. This circumstance is, no doubt, at present terribly against the baker. Wheat, it is said, never yielded less flour. And every bushel of wheat which he buys costs him in fact at least a shilling more than the assized price of wheat, at which he is obliged to sell. Not that he has at the bottom any just reason for complaint: because he has had his harvest in other years, when wheat has yielded well; by which his comparative loss at present has been abundantly compensated. This uncertainty however ought, if it can con-

¹ He either buys flour, which is sold by weight; or if he buys wheat, the price will be always in proportion to the weight. But the price of wheat for the assize of bread is always fixed by the measure, without any regard to the weight.

veniently,

veniently, to be prevented; if only to stop the baker's clamour, in which he is apt to be pretty loud in order to silence that of others, and to which every one has not an answer ready. And this uncertainty would be prevented, if the price of the bushel of wheat was set by weight, instead of measure, or the assize of bread set, not by the price of wheat, but of flour, which is sold by weight.

Before I dismiss this subject, I cannot avoid taking notice of one circumstance, if it be well founded, very advantageous to the baker. I have been assured by persons who have made frequent experiments of this, that a peck, that is, fourteen pounds of flour, will upon an average make at the lowest nineteen pounds of bread. But the peck loaf by the statute is to weigh seventeen pounds and six ounces only. Here therefore is a farther profit of a pound and ten ounces of bread to the baker upon every peck loaf which he sells; and that too perpetually increasing with the value of bread. This allowance, I am informed, was made him in consideration of his trouble in sending out his goods, or in any other way attending to the sale of them: which, it seems, is not supposed to be taken into the account by the magistrate. Whether this

In this latter case it would be necessary to ascertain the price of flour by that of wheat. Otherwise we should be entirely in the hands of the miller and meal-man.

allow-

allowance be in itself reasonable, I pretend not to say ; but of this I am confident, that its advance with the advanced price of the goods is totally unreasonable.

If the reader is as heartily tired with this subject as I am, he will have little patience in attending to another point which I still have to settle with these assize tables. A point however of a more peaceful nature than the former, because I can here plainly see very good intention, though the effect has been otherwise. According to the present regulations a loaf of household bread of the same weight with a loaf of wheaten is sold at a fourth lower ; or, what amounts to the same thing, supposing the prices of these two different sorts of loaves to be the same, the weight of the household must be made to exceed that of the wheaten by one fourth. The consequence is, that the profit upon wheaten bread is considerably more to the baker, than that upon household. I see clearly the object of the legislature in this arrangement. And a most laudable object it is ; viz. that the profit of the baker should be lower upon bread which he sold to the poor than upon what he sold to the rich. But what has been its operation ? The reverse of what was intended. This regulation has amounted to little less than a prohibition of household bread ; such sound, wholesome, and nourishing bread as the law intended. The law itself indeed plainly shews

shews its suspicion of this. From a sort of conviction that the baker would not be fond of dealing much in this kind of goods, it obliges him, under a penalty, to sell this bread, when he has any in his shop. But does it, or can it oblige him to make this sort of bread at all? It does not, it cannot oblige him to this, but by making it his interest to do it. And then it will effectually oblige him. At present, I am informed, that the baker cannot by any means contrive to make his profit upon household bread equal to that upon wheaten. The necessary consequence is, that he will make as little of the former as possible. And he will take care that the little he does make, and which he makes merely to avoid clamour, shall not be of a sort to be much called for. He will now and then send a good, sound, sweet household loaf to a rich customer, who may have a fancy for it; but nothing of this sort for common sale, or for the poor. Nor would he thank the former for his custom, did he keep his whole family upon this bread. I could wish then, that the profits of the baker were nearly the same upon both sorts of bread. He would then make each equally good, according to its respective fineness. And if, after this, the poor shall be found to prefer quality to quantity, and fineness to weight, I will be no longer, as I often have been, their advocate upon this occasion.

But

But why, after all, should there be two sorts of bread made? Every body knows what is good, wholesome, nourishing bread; fit for general consumption; both for rich and for poor. That sort of bread, I mean, which is generally found in those families which make their own bread; that from which the coarse bran only is taken. I could wish therefore, that no other bread was subject to an assize, besides this. The table would be more simple, and the several arrangements easier and more intelligible. By fixing also thus precisely the kind of flour with which the assized bread was to be made, and laying a severe penalty upon adulteration, or any deviation from it, the public would be better secured from fraud and imposition. If the baker can find a market for a finer commodity, let him make it; and let him set his own price upon it too. If he has a vent also for bread of a coarser sort, to be afforded cheaper, let him, if he pleases, make that likewise. But let the bread, which the law undertakes to regulate, be of one sort only, of a fixed and certain quality, and that the most easily determinable, and such as is most proper for universal consumption.

After having endeavoured in the course of this chapter to explain and vindicate the principle upon which the legislature has thought proper to lay the bread trade under some regulations and restrictions, and taken the liberty to mention some defects

defects and inconveniencies, as they appeared to me, in those now established, and also to point out a method of removing them, may I still be allowed to hint a doubt with respect to the real utility of any such interposition upon the whole. The many difficulties that attend the construction of any plan of assize for bread, the manifest defects in the present tables¹, the perpetual clamours which they are found to give birth to, and above all the real evil arising to the public from a wrong step taken in them and established by law, have, I confess, almost determined my opinion for their total abolition. If the trade were, like most others, left free from restriction, we should naturally be led to buy our bread, as we do every thing else, at the best shop we could; and he who sold best and cheapest would be sure of the most custom for his goods. The only danger here

¹ I should be sorry to incur the imputation of throwing wanton blame upon the laws of my country in this, or any instance. But they lie open to general examination; and may be innocently reasoned upon, though not transgressed. Whatever law indeed or measure declines examination avows itself at the same time to be either improper or unjust. Moreover, the law which we have been considering justifies, above all others, the strictest scrutiny. It is not only of general concern, but it more particularly affects that body of people amongst us, whose situation is most wretched and deplorable, the poor in London and in large manufacturing towns; and who have unhappily no other way of making their distresses known, than that most unjustifiable one, of clamour and outrage.

would

would arise from a combination amongst the bakers. An iniquity, which it would behove the legislature to guard against as strongly as possible.

And thus much at length for corn and bread, the first, the most necessary, the most innocent, and the most wholesome of all kinds of food; fit nourishment for every age, and almost every constitution; and which will not, I hope, be thought too great luxury for the lowest human creature¹.

¹ I say nothing of the distillery, as the legislature seems to have considered it in the true point of view, and has laid it under proper regulations.

Since the above chapter was sent to the press, I have met with a pamphlet entitled, Important Considerations on the Act of the 31 Geo. 2, &c. That writer has examined some parts of this subject more minutely than I had an opportunity of doing; and has shewn beyond a doubt, that very exorbitant profits are made under the present table of assize by some or all who are concerned in the trade. His facts and observations have also confirmed me in my sentiments, with regard to the expediency, and even necessity of subjecting one sort of bread only to legal regulations, and of describing its quality in the most determinate manner possible.

OF CATTLE.

THE subject of cattle comes now before our view: a source of provisions next in utility to corn, and in many respects of indispensable necessity to life. They afford us while living, the females I mean, a most delicious and nourishing food; and custom has rendered the slaughter of them equally necessary to our support and subsistence. Their skins and other natural covering are made afterwards to answer the like purposes of clothing to the human body, are absolutely necessary to these purposes, and are in consequence the basis of those manufactures, which are of most real and universal utility. In every view then these creatures claim our utmost attention and care. And a wise government will take every possible method to preserve to its people a plentiful and unfailing supply of them; and to guard the sources of this supply with the most watchful attention.

³ By cattle I understand in general those animals which supply the shambles. If the term be sometimes used in a more limited sense, I hope it will be easily seen from some circumstance or other in the place where it stands.

It

It is not to be dissembled, that there is at present, from some circumstances or other, a very considerable interruption of this supply. The evil is every where most severely felt, and calls loudly for redress. The price of corn is even low, in comparison to that of meat of all kinds, of butter, and of cheese. The complaint moreover is universal. It is not merely in or near the capital, where the consumption of these articles is more considerable, but it is heard in the remotest corners of the land. The same complaints of the high price of wool and leather are made every where; also of tallow, soap, and candles: articles of indispensable necessity. All these complaints arise in great measure from one general cause: the diminution of the breed of those cattle, from whence these commodities are originally procured; or, at least, from its comparative diminution: from a real scarcity of this stock, in proportion to the great demand for it, and the great consumption of its produce.

I enquire not into any accidental or temporary causes of this evil. The effects of these will not be of any long continuance. And their constant tendency is to work their own cure. A kind of cure to be preferred to all others, where it can be had. Here scarcity will infallibly produce plenty.

And

* The French proverb is, Cherté fait abondance. But do not these observations, it may be said, clash with a former

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assertion,

And it would have the same effect always, were things allowed their free and natural course, without being counteracted and checked by foreign influence. By these incidental causes I mean, either any particular distemper raging amongst the several breeds of cattle; or a more than common slaughter of the young and lean stock from a temporary want of provision for them. These are misfortunes which cannot be prevented; which time only can remedy, and will certainly assertion, that the demand would always bear a proportion to the increase of the commodity? I think not. The natural progress of things is evidently this. The scarcity and high price of a commodity tempts men to the increase of it. This increase necessarily lowers the price, and in consequence tends to multiply the demand for it. This increase of demand will operate in the same manner as scarcity in the first instance, will again inevitably raise the price, and be of course a temptation to a still farther increase of the commodity. I meant not ever to say that these circumstances would always bear an exact proportion to one another. They will go on, if not disturbed by interposition from any other quarter, (the very thing to be prevented) alternately operating upon one another as cause and effect. But the operation is always gradual; and a distinct time must be allowed for every step. And the happy circumstance is, that every step is attended with manifest advantages to the society. If however I have been at any time led in the warmth of a particular discussion to express myself more strongly, than is in strictness consistent with what I may have said in the course of any other part of a subject of such complicated connexion, though indeed I am not aware of this, a little attention and candour on the part of the reader will, I hope, easily reconcile me to myself.

remedy.

remedy. But though the breed of cattle has lately suffered in this kingdom from both these causes¹, this will not account for the great scarcity of them at present, and the high price of every thing that arises from them. I enter then at once into a more general enquiry, and attempt to trace up this evil, if possible to its very source. It will, I fear, cost us some pains to clear our way through the infinite perplexity and difficulties with which this subject has been attended. But if the effect is real, the cause is most assuredly so; and may be with certainty found out at least, if not removed.

There are two circumstances absolutely necessary to the plenty of any produce; and which will moreover infallibly ensure it to us. First, that we have the natural and full means of such plenty in our hands; and secondly, that we have sufficient motives to take the necessary pains to procure it. What then is the fact in the present instance with regard to the first of these circumstances? Have we really the means of this plenty in our power? If so, are we in any way disabled from making the true use of them? Have we suffered them by any neglect or mismanagement to escape out of our

¹ The bad effects from the mortality amongst the horned cattle some years ago must have long ceased. Things indeed would have before this time taken a turn towards a greater plenty in consequence of that loss, had there been no check from any other quarter.

hands? Or has unavoidable accident diminished them?

With respect to the first of these questions, the point is out of all doubt. No country upon earth abounds more with pasture of all kinds. No country therefore more capable of being made to abound with flocks and herds. The natural richness of our soil, together with the singular temperature of our climate, preserves to our meadows, and all our inclosed pastures at least, a perpetual verdure, unknown to most other countries. Have we then neglected or misapplied these natural advantages? Have we pursued any methods of agriculture destructive of them? This is very commonly said to be the case. It is said, that the great increase of tillage in this country has diminished in the same proportion the quantity of our pasture lands, and that, by an unhappy perversion indeed, our corn has eat up all our cattle. And I have been more than once exceedingly diverted, to hear this argument taken up with great warmth by one, who had but just before talked himself quite out of breath about the high price of corn.

It may, I think, be admitted as a maxim, that we cannot possibly have too much tillage. As far, I mean, as it is for the interest of the proprietors to suffer their lands to be ploughed; and as long as the farmer can make it worth his while

while to be at the pains and expence of ploughing¹. Whenever indeed it passes these limits, it will check itself, and must stop of course. The principal danger is, that this crisis may come on too soon. My reasons for thinking that we cannot have too much tillage are; first, because we cannot have too much corn: secondly, because our pasture will increase with our tillage; must necessarily increase with it; and when it is really hurt by it, tillage must operate as a check upon itself. There is an inseparable and beautiful connexion between the several branches of agriculture². They are all a mutual aid and support to each other. None of them can subsist asunder from the rest. At least, not one of them can be carried to any sort of perfection alone. Thus tillage requires labour in proportion to its extent. It requires the labour of beasts, as well as of men. There must therefore be

¹ I am aware, that there are many lands in pasture which would produce abundant crops to the farmer, when first broken up, but which would be hurt essentially by being ploughed. In these cases the tenant is commonly laid under restraint. I have therefore anticipated this objection by joining the interest of the proprietor with that of the farmer. And my assertion is, that wherever these two interests unite in favour of tillage, it will be always beneficial to the public.

² Need I remark, that I sometimes use the word agriculture in the limited sense of tillage merely, and sometimes, as in the present instance, as comprehending the whole system of country-business, and the general cultivation and employment of lands.

pasturage and fodder of some kind or other for these animals in proportion to the degree of tillage. And tillage, the very moment in which it begins to destroy their food, must begin to be its own destroyer. Tillage requires the labour of beasts in various ways. It requires oxen or horses (I wish I could say the former only) for ploughing, for carriage, and also for dressing. An increase therefore of tillage seems necessarily to require a proportionable increase of pasture for its own support. I said also, that our pasture was in fact increased by our tillage. In this assertion I am supported by all the information I have been able to get upon this subject. Lands will not bear an unremitted tillage. In our climate particularly they will not bear it. Many of them are therefore laid down with clover at the return of three or four years; and abundant crops are got from them. Others are sown with grass of a different kind, and remain longer in pasturage; as best suits the nature of the soil, and the convenience of the farmer. And as to those deep lands, which are applied solely to tillage, because they will not at all answer for pasturage, and therefore lie fallow every third or fourth year: they are plainly out of the present question. The crops of turnips also, in inclosed grounds, and the lighter soils, afford an abundant supply of winter food for cattle; and where too it is particularly wanted.

wanted. For natural pasturage, and of course hay arising from it, is from the thinness of the soil more scarce, where this kind of culture is most successfully practised. Not to mention that large numbers of cattle are sent thither for winter support from richer lands, abounding more in summer pasturage, where the distance will admit of it. With respect to sheep, the case is somewhat different. They cannot be considered as absolutely necessary to tillage. They are useful in this way only by their folds. And these have been esteemed the best dressing for many kinds of land; and in some countries it is the only dressing that can be easily procured. It does not however appear, that tillage has been at all prejudicial to pasturage even for sheep. I was informed some years ago, that even upon the Wiltshire downs the farmer is enabled to keep larger flocks by means of artificial grass, than he can while they remain in their natural state of pasture: and also that such additional tillage is a temptation to him to multiply his breed of sheep, from the great utility of their folds. I answer not absolutely for this fact; and I have not been in the way of getting more full information. I excuse myself also from entering into a more circumstantial detail upon this subject. The facts which I have mentioned seem to carry with them the strongest

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appear.

appearance of probability ; and, I imagine, there is very little doubt about their truth.

The other circumstance necessary to ensure to us a plentiful supply of this, or any other produce is, that we have sufficient motives to engage us to make a right use of those means which we have in our power to procure it. Not motives of a public kind ; for these will be in vain applied to particular men, or particular bodies of men ; but motives of private interest, sufficient to influence the conduct of those, whose particular business it is to make such application of these means. The strongest of all motives is necessity. I mean not absolute physical necessity, operating by violent means merely ; but that moral necessity which comes nearest to it, and will always be found to ope-

• Though the art of pasturage, if it may be so called, be more simple, and of course the practice of it earlier, than that of tillage, because animals multiply themselves, and may live upon the natural produce of the earth, yet does it by no means follow, that pasturage or grazing is not capable of great improvement, as well as tillage, and that too chiefly by means of tillage. Increase of fodder for cattle may always be made to multiply the breed of cattle. And this increase will in general be found to arise from the most improved and profitable tillage, and in proportion to it. In many kinds of soil grazing is impracticable, and pasturage of any kind attended with little profit, while the lands remain in their natural state. Whereas these very lands may be made capable of feeding great numbers of cattle by means of artificial grass and turnips, the produce of tillage.

rate

rate with a force very little short of it; and which may be so applied, as to have all the good effects of compulsion, and none of the bad ones. In the present instance, it is evident, there is not this necessity; and, I fear, it is hardly in our power to procure it. But whatever can be done in this way should be done. Were oxen, for instance, absolutely necessary to the tillage of lands, and were they alone employed, as in former times, in this work, the whole business would be at once infallibly secured. The breed of oxen would be necessarily increased with the increase of tillage; and a plentiful supply of every thing that arises from this species of cattle would follow of course. A number of dairies would be immediately necessary to this; and there would in consequence arise an abundance of every thing which they produce. But farmers plainly find it their interest to plough in general with horses rather than oxen.

And

And yet I do not find, that the labour of an horse-team in the field is much preferable in point of dispatch to one of oxen. The latter, I am told, will do as much work in a day as the former, allowing them two hours additional time for it. And this, it seems, they will well bear. The men employed in this work do nothing after their return from the field, but take care of their beasts. So that here there is no harm done. Not to mention that a horse is, in many respects, the more expensive animal of the two. There must therefore be something else lying at the bottom. And I take it to be this. The farmer after work-
ing

And our legislature seems to have been all along encouraging them in this practice; by encouraging
 ing his horses three or four years can sell them at a very large price (those of the better sort particularly) for post-chaise business, &c. He has here a quick and constant return of money, without the trouble of grazing, fattening, &c. And he knows himself to be secure of a very profitable vent for his superfluous hay, oats, and other fodder. It is indeed amazing to observe, what a rapid progress this practice has made within a few years; particularly since the rage for post-chaises, and other flying carriages, has been so predominant. While I am writing this, I am informed by a gentleman of Staffordshire, that in his parish there are now but two teams of oxen, where there used to be fourteen; and that there is much the same disproportion in the neighbouring parishes. I have heard the like, indeed worse accounts from Somersetshire; which was twenty years ago full of ox-teams. In the whole county of Essex there is one single ox-team only; and that kept by my lord Clare: whose name I take the liberty of mentioning, *honoris causa*. Mr. De Buffon, in his *Histoire Naturelle*, tom. viii. 12mo ed. ch. du Bœuf, has several just observations, applicable to our present subject. The ox, he says, is of all animals the most profitable; à cet égard l'animal par l'excellence. Its produce is the greatest, and its consumption and expence the least. It improves the land upon which it is fed; whereas most other animals, and particularly the horse, impoverish the best pasture. The ox, from the thickness of its lips, is obliged to feed upon the long and coarse grass chiefly; it can only nip off the extremities of the young and tender blade, without hurting the roots. The horse, on the contrary, tears up root and all of the young and finer grass, and leaves the old and coarser pasture untouched. To this it may be added, that in winter the working ox is fed with straw chiefly; with very little

encouraging in every possible way the breed of the former animals. I own myself to be at a loss for the grounds of these measures. But surely it is one of the few points in which we want a little enlightening. I hinted a doubt, whether it were practicable to lay our farmers under a necessity of ploughing with oxen. Compulsory laws are the last thing I would advise for this purpose. They have always a little hay and no corn. He shews also, that the ox is, by its peculiar structure and character, of all animals, the most fit for the plough; and seems to be designed by nature for this work. Il semble avoir été fait exprès pour la charrue; la masse de son corps, la lenteur de ses mouvemens, le peu de hauteur de ses jambes, tout, jusqu'à sa tranquillité & à sa patience dans le travail, semble concourir à le rendre propre à la culture des champs, & plus capable qu'aucun autre de vaincre la résistance constante & toujours nouvelle que la terre oppose à ses efforts.

The farmer indeed wants not to be told of this. He knows it perfectly; though he will not easily be brought to confess it. And did he not find greater advantage from the sale of his horses, his hay, and his oats, he would want no argument of ours to induce him to return to a practice, which was the general one in many parts of the kingdom, before the demand was so prodigious for the articles above-mentioned. I mean only to set this matter in its true light; to point out the real cause of this revolution, if I may so call it, in the method of tillage to the unprejudiced and disinterested, and to prevent their being led away by the many false representations, which are industriously given of this matter by those, who find their advantage in the continuance of the present practice.

air of oppression; and are in general liable to be evaded: though not perhaps so much in this instance, as in some others. Is there nothing then to be done by way of motive to engage the farmer to return to the old method of ploughing his lands? To make it in some degree advantageous to him, to join at least the labour of oxen with that of horses? Would not immunities of any kind have this effect? Immunities from turnpike toll, and from high-way labour? And might not the deficiencies be made up by imposing an advance of toll², and an additional labour upon horse-teams; and indeed upon all carriages drawn by horses? Or would any considerable harm result from an actual premium given to ox-ploughs to be balanced suppose by a slight tax upon those of horses? I mention these things, as matter of speculation merely; though indeed from the strongest conviction, that the

* I am aware of an objection to this method; and one too arising from my own principles: viz. that it might be prejudicial to tillage. An absolute prohibition of ploughing with horses might perhaps have this effect. But if the other practice could be in any degree brought about by encouragement merely, I see not that it would be attended with this consequence. I was willing however to mention this objection, if only to shew how necessary it is to examine things in every point of view.

* This distinction is made with respect to waggons with wheels of different breadths. Why not the same with respect to the animals by which these carriages are drawn?

... necessity

necessity of the case requires some immediate remedy. For were it not for turnips, a produce in many kinds of land very beneficial to the farmer, and a food which most happily horses have not yet been taught to relish, many a large tract of country would have but very little either beef or mutton of its own growth. And the practice in these countries, I find, is this. They chiefly buy their young stock from other parts, and fatten them while they are growing. For as they have no work for them, it would be only so much loss to keep them, till they were advanced to their full size. They are in consequence killed at half their growth; and the public loses in the same proportion its means of subsistence. Unless indeed the succession was proportionably quickened: as it undoubtedly is not. The farmer is in these situations under a sort of necessity to feed off his turnips with cattle or sheep, because he has no other vent for this produce.

And this points out to us another way, in which the farmer would be obliged to afford us an abundant supply of cattle; connected indeed in some degree with the former, but also distinct from

* Buffon observes, that an ox should be broke gently to the plough at two and a half or at most three years old, and may be worked till the age of ten; when their flesh will be in perfection for fattening. I believe, it has not been the practice in this country to work them quite so long.

from it. Could the farmer be laid under the same necessity with respect to his other fodder, as the nature of the thing seems to have imposed upon him with regard to turnips, the same effect would inevitably follow. If he could not with greater, or at least with equal advantage dispose of his grass, hay, straw, his beans, pease, and oats, he must feed cattle with them, and if he were not able to purchase a sufficient number from breeding countries, he must be obliged to breed himself. But as long as he can carry his goods to a nearer and more profitable market, it is in vain to expect him not to do it. He will fill his barns with oats, while he is sure of so good a price for them. And he can have no doubt of this, while the consumption is so prodigious, even though he sees large quantities of this grain continually brought in upon him from other countries¹. His hay, and other fodder go infallibly to the same market. He has here nothing to do, but to grow and to sell, without any of the trouble or hazard of breeding or buying, fattening and then sending his

¹ The importation of oats within a few years has been very considerable. See the calculation in the essays upon the corn trade. Had we no other proof of the vast increase of horses in this kingdom, the great consumption of this single commodity would be an ample demonstration of it. Does not, by the bye, this prodigious and perpetually increasing demand for oats tend to lessen the growth of other corn, of barley particularly? It certainly must.

stock perhaps to a very distant market. Nor can we possibly expect him to go out of this track, until he finds it to be for his advantage to do so. The earth never produced larger quantities of grass than it did this last year. And yet hay is at a very high price. From whence this, but from the vast consumption by horses? For very little, I fear, has fallen to the share of any other stock, unless it happened to be grown at too great a distance from any considerable number of horses. Consider but for a moment the multitude of these creatures kept in and about London. One half of them, I may venture to say, kept for pleasure merely; and in any other view absolutely useless. Can it be thought strange then, that there are few or no cattle fed near that metropolis? where notwithstanding they are so dearly wanted, and sell at the highest price? But it happens, that hay, and oats, and straw sell there at a still higher price. Reduce first the rival demand! Reduce the number of horses: that will necessarily reduce the price of fodder of all kinds, and will alone turn the scale in favour of cattle.

The very same is to be said with respect to the profest breeder of live stock. He will be sure to deal most largely in that kind of commodity, for which he has the best market. Give him a better market for cattle than for horses, and he will infallibly supply you with
stock them,

them. But is it to be expected he should supply you with cattle, when you are perpetually demanding horses from him? The utmost a breeder can make of a three years old steer is about 6l. And a vast price it is. Double the usual price some years ago. But what is this compared to the price of a colt or a filly of the same age? ten, fifteen, twenty, thirty guineas, almost without bounds. And the fact is, as I have been informed, that not half the number of horned cattle are bred in Yorkshire, in that tract of country called the Craven particularly, that used to be. The diminution is not perhaps so considerable in some other breeding counties, nor in Wales¹. But this practice will doubtless soon find its way to these places likewise: as soon as ever they can get into a strain of more saleable horses, and those of a higher form. One would indeed be led to think, that the great demand of late for lean cattle, and the high price at which they have sold, would be sufficient encouragement to multiply their breed, and be soon followed by an abundant supply of them. And there is no doubt, but it would have this effect, were it not counteracted, and actually subdued, from another quarter; were there no rival demand, still growing upon it, and for ever rising above it. Do we mean then in earnest to in-

¹ I have been informed, that the breed of cattle in Scotland is greatly diminished within a few years.

crease our breed of cattle? Our first step must be to reduce our breed of horses. This will effectually do it; and in my opinion, this only.

I reserve to the next chapter the full examination of this point; and go on now to consider some other expedients which have been thought of to bring about this desirable end.

It has been suggested, that a law obliging every farmer to breed a certain number either of horned cattle, or sheep, or both, in proportion to the quantity of land which he occupies, would effectually secure to us a sufficient supply of them. And it has been said in justification of such a measure, that as the farmer by inclosing and breaking up so many open heaths and commons, applied before solely to the use of running young stock, has deprived the public of the great, it might be almost said, the only source of this breed, it would be no more than justice to oblige him to compensate this loss, by allotting some part of his lands to those purposes from which he has taken so many of them. I have repeatedly declared my aversion to laws of this kind: because there is always an appearance of cruelty, in obliging a man to do what he sees plainly to be his interest not to do; and because also it is scarce possible to put them into full execution, and they are in consequence seldom found effectually to answer their design. In the present instance too, I fear, it would be rather

difficult to keep quite clear of the charge of injustice, as it would be almost impossible to distinguish those lands, which have been thus taken out of commons, from such as were originally in tillage. And were the obligation extended to this latter case, the farmer might complain with some shew of reason, that a burthen was laid upon him, in order to remedy an evil, of which he was not in any respect the cause. A regulation of this kind therefore would with much more propriety and equity have made a part of the several acts of parliament for inclosing common heath and pasture lands; and would in such cases have had no great appearance of severity¹. Not that even this provision would have come up entirely to the point proposed; as there are, I suppose, many lands of private

¹ It may not be improper to observe upon this occasion, that a somewhat similar law with regard to horses was enacted above two hundred years ago. By a Stat. of the 27th of H. 8. Ch. 6. every owner of an inclosed park containing a mile in compass was obliged to keep two breeding mares, of the height of thirteen handfuls at least; under the penalty of 40 s. a month, for every month in which he was deficient. A very considerable penalty at that time of day. This statute is in the true spirit of equal and equitable taxation. And was every owner of a park obliged at this time to keep a certain number of breeding cows, and other young cattle, as should be thought most useful, it would surely be no more than a just compensation to the public for the loss of those lands, which he has taken from its use.

private property, now inclosed for tillage, which were in their rough and open state fit for little else besides breeding. And most certainly nothing but a general law extending to farms of every kind, or at least to all inclosed farms, could answer the proposed design with effect. But I should rather hope, that such a compulsory law was not necessary. Nothing but absolute indubitable necessity could justify it; and it ought to be the very last resource. Infinitely better, if possible, to make it advantageous to the farmer to consume his produce by cattle at home. The effect will then be unavoidable; and that without any hardship, or appearance of hardship. If the market will not supply him with a sufficient stock for this purpose, he will, as I before observed, be under a necessity of breeding for himself. But if, after all, no method can be found out of indirectly engaging the farmer to afford the public a sufficient supply of cattle of all kinds for its consumption, then the necessity of the case will certainly justify some degree of compulsion, though it will alone justify it¹.

Another

¹ Supposing a compulsory law to be necessary for this purpose, the question would probably lie between these two regulations; either an obligation to plough with oxen; or an obligation to breed a certain number of cattle. Each of these regulations seems to have its comparative advantages and disadvantages. The former seems to be more effectual and more secure from evasion: but then it has a

Another method has also been thought of as likely to contribute to the increase of grown cattle and sheep: viz. a prohibition of the slaughter of lambs and calves, the females particularly, for a limited time; suppose a year. This too carries a severity with it which I do not like. And, I fear, no very great consequences would result from it. It would most certainly have at first some bad effects. It would be a plea for an immediate advance of price upon beef, mutton, and pork. The old stock would be also killed off when but half fatted. But this loss, it may be said, would be temporary only, and would be abundantly supplied by the succeeding generation. If this consequence could indeed be depended upon, I should the less object to such a measure. And, without doubt, the preservation of the females is likely to have this effect. But my apprehensions are for the breed itself, lest that should be checked even by so short a suspension of the slaughter of the young. For what says the farmer to all this? If you will not suffer me to make the best of my calves, and my lambs, I will breed the fewer. I will dry up greater appearance of severity, and extends to horned cattle only. The latter seems to be less rigorous, and extends to sheep as well as the other breed: but it requires greater nicety in the arrangement, will not probably draw sufficient consequences after it, and is much more liable to be evaded.

my

my cows, and send them as soon as possible to the butcher. Nay, I will breed horses. There I am sure of making my market. A measure of this kind cannot therefore be effectual, unless executed by surprize; and without allowing the farmer time to reason upon it.

But in order to supply this manifest deficiency of the breed of cattle at home, importation of lean stock from abroad has been of late much recommended. I recur here, as I do always, if possible, to general principles. I have already asserted, that the tendency of exportation is to increase, and of importation to lessen the quantity of the very commodity thus exported or imported. This principle, no doubt, requires restriction. It was laid down with some restriction; and indeed seems always very clearly to limit and restrain itself. As this however is a point of the last importance, and of great extent, I shall endeavour to explain myself still more fully upon it. The principle, in both its branches, necessarily supposes both the possibility and the utility of a perpetual increase of that produce which it means to encourage; not an increase ad infinitum, but an increase sufficient to answer the purpose of plenty; and to which no distinct bounds can, or ought to be set. It supposes moreover, what indeed is more or less the case in every thing that arises from the earth, some degree of hazard and uncertainty in the produce. These two circumstances mani-

festly concur in the case of corn in this country. I maintain therefore, that this principle has held, and always will hold, in that instance. But if from natural or other circumstances there is a check upon any commodity, preventing its produce beyond a certain degree, and that short of the degree necessary to the attainment of a sufficient plenty of it, or if (though it is scarce worth while to put this case) ¹ there is a security of a fixed and certain produce, the operation of these measures is necessarily reversed, and the principle no longer holds good ². If from natural

¹ There is no other use in putting such cases, than in order to shew more strongly the reverse of them.

² The practice with respect to wool and raw hides seems at first sight to carry with it an objection to this reasoning. Exportation of these is prohibited, and importation allowed; evidently with a view to procure plenty of these commodities. How is this reconcilable with the general principle we have laid down? A little attention will not only clear up this difficulty, but will perhaps serve to confirm the reasoning, which it seems at first view to destroy. In the first place, these commodities make but a small part of the animals from whence they arise. It may be expedient therefore to procure, if possible, larger quantities of these, than can arise from the animals themselves bred upon the spot. This plainly brings us to the case mentioned above; viz. that of the impossibility of an home produce sufficient to answer the purpose of plenty. This therefore can only be procured by the importation of such commodities. Nor will the importation of these particular articles operate in any considerable degree as a check upon the native produce; though importation of the animals themselves most certainly would.

ral circumstances the growth cannot be increased, to attempt this in any way is little short of frenzy. If from other considerations it ought not, it is avowed folly. If moreover the quan-

would. In this view importation of tallow, grease, &c. may be frequently advisable. A second circumstance to be attended to in this matter is; that these articles are not for immediate consumption, in their raw state, but are the basis of our most considerable manufactures. The object here therefore is, to prevent these raw materials from getting into other hands, as well as to procure a sufficient quantity of them for ourselves. For could other nations draw these articles from us, they would be able to undersell us even more than they do; and we should be under a still greater necessity than we are at present of forcing a market for our goods. Not that I have any doubt, but the allowance of a free exportation of wool and hides, so small a part as they make of the animals from which they arise, would considerably increase the home production of them, and of the latter especially. The same cause would be followed by the same effect here, as elsewhere. It has been frequently followed by this effect in our own country; and has been complained of as productive of the greatest evils: the neglect of tillage particularly. And Sir Thomas More complains in his Utopia, alluding to these evils, that a sheep had become in England a more ravenous animal than a lion or an wolf, and devoured whole villages, cities, and provinces. (Hume's hist. of Eng. vol. iii. p. 322. 4to ed.) And it would now be followed by another very terrible effect; the destruction of our most valuable manufactures. The moment these commodities are by manufactory made fit for immediate use, our principle again takes place. Exportation is encouraged, and a heavy duty laid upon importation: and in some cases of home manufacture there is an absolute prohibition.

tity of any produce be fixed and certain, a state has nothing to do, but to send a part of it abroad, if the quantity be too great for home consumption; to import, if it be not sufficient; and to do neither the one nor the other, if there be just as much as it has occasion for. Let us see then, how these circumstances will apply to the point before us. The questions which arise here are the two following. Is this country (in all its extent I mean, for I would wish to have the most open and uninterrupted communication between every part of it) incapable of producing a number of cattle sufficient for its consumption? Or are there any other considerations, which render the encouragement of this produce at home improper, or prejudicial? I take it for granted, that both these questions will at once be answered in the negative. It cannot, I think, be said, that Great-Britain and Ireland (the colonies are perhaps too distant to be taken into the account) are unable to produce a number of cattle equal to the demand for them. And it will not, I hope, be said, that this produce ought to be checked or discouraged. But importation from abroad will infallibly operate as a check upon the home produce in this as in other instances. If it has any effect at all, it must have this. If it lowers the price of lean cattle, (and unless it does this, it does nothing) it will inevitably check the breed of them. The
attention

attention of the breeder will be diverted still farther from this object, as it becomes less his interest to attend to it. This must in course of time be the certain consequence of any considerable importation. It will indeed be creeping silently on from the very first moment the markets begin to fall. But of what consequence, it may be said, is it from whence we get our cattle, provided we have a sufficient plenty of them? Surely of the greatest consequence. For will a supply of cattle from abroad be in any view equivalent to an abundant breed of them at home? Such a supply must ever be precarious; and will perhaps fail us most at the time in which we most dearly want it. And in this case we are without any resource. Whereas a native breed can never fail us; can never fail us essentially, and in its sources. And any accidental interruption of it will, as I have before observed, work its own cure. Not to mention, that the produce of the dairy cannot possibly be increased, but will, I am confident, inevitably suffer by such importation.

* Every body knows, how prodigious the variations were in the price of wheat, and to what distresses the nation was frequently reduced, when it subsisted in great measure upon importation, and depended upon its neighbours as it were for its daily bread. The same bad effects would, no doubt, sometimes happen, if England depended for its supply of cattle upon foreign countries. Not to mention the greater awkwardness and inconvenience of water carriage in this instance.

No.

No inconsiderable circumstance this in our present manner of living. I would not be understood to say, that there are no circumstances in which the importation of lean stock may be admitted. As a temporary supply of a temporary scarcity, such an expedient may be advisable. And I do not say positively, that this is not a proper step at present. But this I must now and always say, that unless it be accompanied by some remedy of a more vigorous and powerful operation, striking at the very root of the disease, and tending to the recovery and reestablishment of the home breed, it is in my opinion, a measure not even at this time to be advised. If the whole business is supposed to be done, after a few thousand head of cattle are brought in from Holland or elsewhere, better, I think, that nothing had been done. Such a supply can be but a palliative at the best^{*}. And it is too a palliative of the most fatal kind. For, though it may give us a little present ease, it inevitably tends to confirm and rivet the disorder upon us. Let us then, if possible, try at a more radical cure. Let us endeavour gradually to expel the poison which has diffused itself through every vein; and begins to prey upon our very vitals. No remedy can be applied with any effect, as long as we suffer

^{*} Les palliatifs sont sans contredit la pire des recettes pour le régime d'un état. L'ami des Hommes, tom. i, pag. 201.

this evil to lurk within us, and to counteract every attempt we make for our restoration and recovery.

I shall throw together a few observations at the close of this chapter, relative to the subject of it, but which did not fall into its general plan.

The present scarcity of hogs, and the high price of pork and bacon in consequence of it, are owing in some measure to the cause before explained: as far, particularly, as the corn, &c. for fattening those animals is diverted into a different channel of consumption, and as far as the growth of that kind of corn, which has been generally consumed in this way, is diminished by the extraordinary growth of any other grain. Besides that the respective prices of the different kinds of butcher's meat, and indeed of all provisions, will be in great measure regulated by each other.

There is however another plain reason for the present scarcity of these animals, as well as of all kinds of poultry; a reason which has been already hinted at, but which deserves a still more particular explanation. It is clearly owing to the accumulation of farms, and the consequent destruction of farm-houses, and farm-yards, the chief nurseries both of hogs and poultry. It is not enough to say, that neither the great farmer nor his family will attend to this comparatively trifling

trifling business, any farther than is necessary for their own consumption, (which indeed is not inconsiderable in the present age of universal luxury) though there is, doubtless, a great deal of truth in this. But the fact is, that the very sources of plenty, with respect to these articles, are lost by the decrease of farm-houses. Divide an estate of two thousand acres into ten distinct farms, and you will infallibly bring to market, I may venture to say, twenty times the quantity of hogs, and poultry, and eggs; and not a bushel of corn the less. Each family will have leisure to attend to these lesser concerns; and the profit arising from them will ensure their inclination to attend to them.

The exorbitant price of poultry within the reach of the London market (and it would be difficult to say how far that extends) is also evidently owing in a great degree to the vast consumption of these articles by the wealthy inhabitants of that metropolis. Here the effect of luxury upon plenty is immediate. The rich absolutely engross, as it were, these lesser articles of provision, and will have them at whatever expence. To the general and actual scarcity of them, arising from the circumstance above-mentioned, there is therefore added a partial and comparative, but not less real scarcity to the public from this prodigious demand for them. The same may be said with respect to the demand for fish. The only commodity

commodity this not capable of any considerable increase by art and improvement: and which is now become, even in situations very near the coast, an article of luxury altogether.

Nor is the effect of luxury upon the grosser kinds of provision, upon butcher's meat, for instance, of all kinds, less real and certain, tho' not so generally observed and acknowledged. By drawing large quantities of these articles to its own quarters it necessarily diminishes their general plenty. It in fact increases the demand, and consequently raises the market. But in this assertion I find myself perpetually contradicted: though, I think, for my own part, nothing more certain, or more demonstrable. I am perpetually told, that the lord or the merchant, (for they may in this respect be not unfairly put together) who has twenty dishes at his table, does not eat half so much beef or mutton, as the man who has but one. But what quantity is there brought into his kitchen? This is the only question of consequence. I believe it is well known to those who are initiated in the mysteries of this kind of luxury, that many a pound of meat is often drawn into a very small compass. These men therefore do not, it is true, eat much meat; they eat only essence of meat'. How immense

too

Il y a des miseres sur la terre, says La Bruyere with great force of expression, qui saisissent le cœur: il manque à quelques

too is the consumption of these articles by their servants ; I verily believe, that each domestic (upon an average) in every gentleman's family in the kingdom consumes as much butcher's meat as ten common labourers, taking them one with the other, either in the field, or in the loom. It is well indeed, if at present the wages of the latter will find bread for their families. But what right upon earth, in a public view I mean, has this race of men, to so disproportionate an allowance ? None, but in consequence of that precious maxim, that every one has a right to what he can get. Do they in any respect contribute to the reproduction of what they consume ? If they do, they are welcome to it. Otherwise, their consumption is so much clear loss of provision to the public. Suppose then a reduction of servants to half the present number ; what would be the consequence ? Every good one that can be imagined. Their consumption would be diffused ; and distributed more equally throughout the community ; with which they would now become more thoroughly mixed. The butcher's orders from the rich would be lessened in pro-

quelques uns jusqu'aux alimens ; ils redoutent l'hiver, ils apprehendent de vivre. L'on mange ailleurs des fruits précoces ; l'on force la terre, & les saisons pour fournir à sa délicatesse. DE SIMPLES BOURGEOIS, SEULEMENT A CAUSE QU'ILS ETOIENT RICHES, ONT EU L'AUDACE D'AVALER EN UN SEUL MORCEAU LA NOURRITURE DE CENT FAMILLES. La Bruyere, ch. 6.

portion

portion to the diminution of their family. There would be in consequence so much more for the market, and for general use. Many of the hands thus dismissed would also betake themselves to some useful employment; and there would gradually arise an increase of people and of industry. Labour would in consequence become cheaper; and would soon be found to balance the grievance so much dreaded by interested minds, arising from a fall of prices in consequence of plenty.

One cannot but observe in the present state of, what we call, civilized society, how the natural order of things is in many respects totally inverted; and the art of government become little else than a perpetual struggle against nature. They that work the hardest live too the hardest. And it seems to be looked upon by some as an act of generosity, that they, who have naturally the best right to live, are suffered to live at all. The hardship of this case is put in a very singular way, and with great strength, by the original writer last mentioned. *L'on voit, says he, certains animaux farouches, des males & des femelles, répandus par la campagne, noirs, livides, & tout brûlés du soleil, attachés à la terre qu'ils fouillent, & qu'ils remuent avec une opiniâtreté invincible: ils ont comme une voix articulée; & quand ils se levent sur leurs pieds, ils montrent une face humaine; & en effet ils sont des hommes,*

mes. Ils se retirent la nuit dans des tanières où ils vivent de pain noir, d'eau & de racine. Ils épargnent aux autres hommes la peine de semer, de labourer, & de recueillir pour vivre ; & méritent ainsi de ne pas manquer de se pain qu'ils ont semé.

All this may perhaps be looked upon, as declamatory and extravagant. I know there is in the generality of mankind a very convenient propensity to treat as such, all representation of evils which they do not feel, and to think all well, while they are well. Much more, should it happen, that they are in fact the better, because all is not well. This unfeeling, selfish moderation of character, in its most depraved degree, is thus finely drawn by Rousseau with his utmost force of pencil. It presents, I hope, the exact likeness of no human creature living. But some of the features, I fear, are to be seen in too many. And who would not shudder to resemble it in any degree ?

Un de ces honnêtes gens du grand monde, dont les maximes ressemblent beaucoup à celles des frippons, de ces gens si doux, si modérés, qui trouvent toujours que tout va bien, parce qu'ils ont intérêt que rien n'aille mieux ; qui sont toujours contents de tout la monde, parce qu'ils ne s'occupent de personne ; qui autour d'une bonne table soutiennent qu'il n'est pas vrai que le peuple

ple ait faim ; qui, le gouffet bien garni, trouvent fort mauvais qu'on declame en faveur des pauvres ; qui, de leur maison bien fermée, verroient voler, piller, egorger, massacrer tout le genre humain sans se plaindre ; ATTENDU QUE DIEU LES A DOUES D'UNE DOUCEUR TRES-MERITOIRE A SUPPORTER LES MALHEURS D'AUTRUI.

OF HORSES.

THE breed of horses in this kingdom seems to have been at all times a favourite object with our legislature; and it has been pursued with an unremitted attention and zeal. This spirit has maintained its ground amidst all the changes and caprices to which kingdoms, as well as individuals, are ever subject. Because the animal itself is of the greatest utility, and contributes in numberless ways to the convenience and comfort of life, it seems to have been all along taken for granted, that the breed could not possibly be multiplied to any pernicious extreme. In earlier times the exportation of horses was prohibited, unless by special licence from the King¹. The prohibition was at first indeed extended to horses for sale only; and exportation for private use was allowed. But it being found, that the law was frequently evaded under cover of this exception, and that a great number of these animals were still carried off for sale, this door also was very soon shut upon them². In a later period, when

¹ II Hen. 7. ch. 13.—22 Hen. 8. ch. 7.—1 Edw. 6. ch. 7.

² 5 Eliz. ch. 19.

the effects of commerce began to be better understood, the prohibitory statute was repealed, exportation has been allowed, and, comparatively speaking, encouraged¹. These opposite measures had evidently the same general object in view; viz. the perpetual increase of the breed at home².

It will not, I think, be said by any one, that the breed of horses cannot possibly be multiplied to any dangerous excess; or that this breed is in point of general utility comparable to that of cattle; I mean, when they at all interfere with each other. The principle which we endeavoured to establish in a former part of this enquiry, with respect to the relative value of the produce or manufactures of any country, is entirely applicable here³. And it has, I hope, sufficiently appeared from the foregoing chapter, that a numerous breed of horses must inevitably operate as a check to that of cattle; and that it does at present actually operate in this manner. Not to repeat therefore what has been already said, I will only add, (what indeed every man must see to be the fact, if he will but open his eyes) that

¹ 22 Ch. 2. ch. 13. sec. 8.

² The legislature thought proper in one instance to pursue this object by a compulsory law. A measure never ventured upon, but in cases of necessity. See the note to page 178.

³ See page 6 and 7 of this Enquiry.

the food of all kinds consumed by horses is either directly or indirectly so much taken from the subsistence of the people; and that in whatever proportion you can diminish the number of those consumers, you will increase in the very same proportion the quantity of provision for the community¹.

I shall therefore go on to mention without reserve whatever measures have occurred to me as conducive to this end; some more, others without doubt, less proper to be put into execution.

The first and most obvious measure for this purpose is, a restraint upon the exportation of horses; and this, either by an absolute prohibition, or a duty very nearly amounting to it. A measure this surely of indispensable necessity, and moreover perfectly innocent in all its consequences. I know nothing of the number of horses annually exported. But, I suppose, it might be easily ascertained. I have heard indeed,

¹ This is strictly and literally true with respect to all horses, as far as their mere consumption is concerned. It is true in all its circumstances, and its whole extent, with respect to those kept for pleasure only. Horses employed in useful labour are to be considered as of real value to the public, in proportion as the produce by their labour overbalances their consumption. Unless indeed such labour can be supplied by other means without this consumption, or by animals which are useful in other ways than merely by their labour.

that

that it is very considerable; and that large fortunes have been made by it. And while I am writing this, I see in the public papers a commission to one person for six hundred hunters¹. Now has a nation any right to complain of the scarcity of cattle, when with its eyes open it suffers itself thus to be continually drained of them? We perhaps intend only to send away our horses; but the fact is, that we are all the while sending off our cattle. Since for every single horse which we export we should have had so much beef or mutton. And most certainly the more you send abroad, the greater number you will be sure to have at home. But perhaps there is some considerable public benefit arising from this trade. Large sums of money are brought into the kingdom by it. Worse and worse still. *Flagitio additis damnum*. We have already too much money in the kingdom. Preserve your people; that is, find employment and subsistence for them, without which you will in vain endeavour to preserve them, and you need be in no pain about the want of money in the kingdom². But how

¹ I have been since astonished to see in the papers a commission from Germany for two thousand draught horses.

² See for perfect satisfaction in this point Mr. Hume's Essay upon the balance of trade. To such however as think this importation of money a circumstance of real utility to the public it may be observed, that the importation of oats for the maintenance of horses carries off perhaps as much money as the export of horses brings in.

does exportation of horses contribute to this? It absolutely robs the people of the means of their subsistence. And as to employment, I believe, a single acre in tillage employs more hands than five hundred horses bred for exportation.

A second measure much to be advised for the same purpose is the suppression of King's plates. I have not been able to inform myself of the exact date of this custom: nor is it material. Its object plainly is, to encourage a breed of horses above the common form: that is, to encourage a breed at all times useless, because avowedly too good for use; and at present in many respects to the last degree pernicious. The consumption of a single running horse would support several head of cattle. And indeed many a large family is maintained at a less expence than one of these pampered animals. But this loss of provision in the first instance, though by no means unworthy attention, is nothing in comparison to the train of bad consequences which these prizes assist at least in giving birth to. They tend to multiply a race of men, as well as of animals, I will not say merely useless to the state, but most essentially pernicious to it. Those, I mean, with whom the business of the turf is made a trade, and who are accordingly fully initiated into the mysteries of it. It is to be feared too, that minds of a more ingenuous cast have often suffered by giving way to these dangerous amusements. The avowed
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ed doctrines of the turf are certainly not quite compatible with that delicate sense of honour and virtue, which can alone form the basis of real worth. And that loose kind of casuistry, which seems to be essentially necessary to any degree of proficiency in the art of gaming, will be apt insensibly to insinuate itself into the whole character. Not to mention the temptations to which loss of fortune may expose men : temptations, I mean, to repair their losses by methods which they would have otherwise disdained ; and which they scarce dare avow to themselves. The public money indeed expended in this way is trifling, and of itself hardly worth attention. My objection is not to the expence, but to the object of it. Were a much larger sum expended in suppressing a practice, which these prizes are meant to encourage and reward, I should think it most usefully employed. If the effect be bad, there can be no doubt about the removal of it, and of every thing that contributes to produce it. But the withdrawing of these prizes must inevitably have this tendency. It would perhaps prevent entirely some meetings of this kind. It would most certainly damp the ardour of those who embark in these pursuits from views of interest only. And, I should think too, an example of this kind from the first authority could not fail of almost an universal influence. But, at all events, let not the least imputation remain

there, from whence every shadow of it ought to be entirely removed.

The breed of horses would be diminished in a third way by giving all possible encouragement to ploughing, &c. with oxen. This measure indeed strikes at the very root of the evil in many ways; and, could it in any degree be brought about, would be complete and decisive. But as much as is necessary has been said upon this point in the foregoing chapter.

A fourth means to the same end is to open, as much as possible, communications by water. This method of carriage would evidently render horses less necessary, and consequently lessen the demand for them. I have already insisted upon the great utility of these improvements: and it cannot be too strongly enforced. Good roads have also the same tendency in a lesser degree; and also all mechanical improvements to save the labour of horses.

Fifthly, by reducing our cavalry as low as possible, we should in some degree promote the same good effect. The dragoon establishment in time of peace seems to serve little other purpose than mere parade; and it is, even as it now stands, beyond all doubt, higher than is necessary. But, what is worse, we are not contented to march two or three thousand useless consumers from one part of the kingdom to another, but

we even suffer, as I have been informed, French troops to be mounted with English breed.

A sixth means of checking the breed of horses would be to prevent the horrid havock that is made of them by the present method of travelling. A horse in the post-chaise, post-coach, or machine business is run down in two or three years : whereas it would with fair usage, barring accidents, last ten, twelve, or fifteen years. This rapid consumption calls for a proportionably quick succession of them ; and is of course a perpetual encouragement to the increase of the breed. I know not indeed, whether the rage of killing horses, or that of breeding them, be greater in the present age. I could heartily wish to put a check upon both. The cruelty exercised towards these creatures, as well in preparing them for sale, as in the actual employment of them, is beyond all bounds ; and is a disgrace to humanity¹. This depravation is indeed

¹ The cruelty of the lower class of people (not that I mean to exempt others from this charge) towards horses is horrid and almost inconceivable : of coachmen, carmen, postilions, and, more than all, colliers. These wretches have, most of them, little power over any thing, but their horses and their families. And here they seldom fail to give it its full swing. *Le puissant, says Mr. Helvetius, sera toujours injuste & vindicatif. M. de Vendome disoit plaisamment à ce sujet, que dans la marche des armées, il avoit souvent examiné les querelles des mulets & des muletiers ;*

deed got to its very last stage ; all kind of tenderness to these animals being made matter of ridicule

& qu'à la honte de l'humanité, la raison étoit presque toujours du côté des mulets. De l'Esprit, disc. iii. ch. 81.

I shall subjoin here, for the amusement of the reader, a passage from Buffon, and another from the Abbé du Bos, shewing us the very different treatment which these animals meet with in those countries where they are most esteemed, and carried to their highest perfection. Countries indeed despised and accounted barbarous by civilized Europe.

Comme les Arabes n'ont qu'une tente pour maison, cette tente leur sert aussi d'écurie ; la jument, le poulain, le mari, la femme & les enfans couchent tous pêle-mêle les uns avec autres : on y voit les petits enfans sur le corps, sur le col de la jument & du poulain, sans que ces animaux les blessent ni les incommodent ; on diroit qu'ils n'osent se remuer, de peur de leur faire du mal : ces jumens sont si accoutumées à vivre dans cette familiarité, qu'elles souffrent toute sorte de badinage. Les Arabes ne les battent point, ils les traitent doucement, ils parlent & raisonnent avec elles, ils en prennent un très-grand soin, ils les laissent toujours aller au pas, & ne les piquent jamais sans nécessité : mais aussi dès qu'elles se sentent chatouiller le flanc avec le coin de l'étrier elles partent subitement & vont d'une vitesse incroyable, elles sautent les haies & les fossés aussi légèrement que des biches ; & si leur cavalier vient à tomber, elles sont si bien dressées, qu'elles s'arrêtent tout court, même dans le galop le plus rapide. Hist. Nat. tom. vii. p. 346.

The other account is taken by the Abbé du Bos from the letters of Busbequius, Ambassador from the Emperor Ferdinand I. to the Grand Seigneur Soliman II.

J'observai dans la Bythinie, que tout le monde, & même les payfans, y traitent leurs poulains avec humanité, qu'ils les caressent, comme ont fait les enfans lorsqu'ils veulent leur

cule merely. I have therefore scarce any expectation of being heard upon this subject. I would otherwise propose, that the several stages for post-chaises, machines, &c. should be fixed as nearly as possible, and the time for driving them limited. I could wish also, upon the supposition of a farther tax upon horses used in this way, that there might be a partial exemption in favour of a horse that had been kept upwards of three years

leur faire faire quelque chose, & qu'ils leur laissent la liberté d'aller & de venir par toute la maison. Volontiers ils les feroient mettre à table avec eux. Les Palfreniers gouvernent les chevaux avec la même douceur. C'est en les flattant, c'est presque en les haranguant qu'ils les conduisent, & jamais ils ne les battent qu'à l'extrémité. Aussi les chevaux prennent d'amitié pour les hommes, & il est très-rare d'en trouver qui ruent, ou qui soient vicieux en aucune maniere. En nos contrées ils sont nourris bien différemment. Nos palfreniers n'entrent jamais dans l'écurie sans tempêter contre eux, & ils ne croiroient point les avoir bien pansés, s'ils ne leur avoient pas donné cent coups à propos de rien, traitement qui leur fait craindre & haïr les hommes. By the same gentle methods, he says, the Turks teach their horses to kneel at being mounted; to pick up a cane or a sabre from the ground with their teeth, and to present it to any one; to go through their whole manège without a rider, and by the word of command only. The ambassador also mentions, that he had brought his own horses to a practice of neighing and fixing their eyes stedfastly upon him whenever he called any of them by their name; and that he had made this acquaintance with them by means of some pieces of melon, with which he used to feed them. Reflexions sur la poésie & sur la peinture, tom. ii. p. 574, 575.

in this service by the same person, and a total exemption at the end of six.

And an actual tax upon horses is a seventh measure which I would propose, in order to reduce the number of them; upon such particularly as are kept in any degree for pleasure. I need hardly say, that running horses would stand the foremost in my list. These indeed can scarce be taxed too deeply. For I cannot conceive the least harm of any sort to arise even from a total extinction of them. I am sure great good would arise from it both to those who are and to those who are not concerned in the supposed diversion which they afford. But it would not be my aim to push things to this extremity. I mean not a prohibition of races. But I could wish them to be less frequent than at present. I would have those who chuse to indulge themselves in this sport pay roundly for it; and that to the public, as well as to their grooms and jockeys. For they injure the public. They occasion an extraordinary consumption of that produce of the earth, to which the people have the first right. They ought therefore to make some return to them. And they would in this way make some return; as taxes upon this and other articles of luxury might be substituted in the room of some of those heavy burthens which are now laid upon the necessities of life, and are so grievously felt by the bulk
of

of the people. Much the same may be said with respect to horses for the field. These serve to amusement merely ; though not perhaps to so pernicious an amusement as the former. I confess myself an enemy to hunting. I could never entirely separate the idea of cruelty from this practice. And cruelty, however softened or disguised, I detest. It is a practice delivered down to us from our savage state. For hunting is the amusement, the business, the whole life of a savage. And he has necessity for his plea. It is moreover at present rather a cowardly kind of cruelty. For the most timid and harmless animals are the general objects of chase. We have very few *Ascaniuses* amongst us. *Optat aprum, aut fulvum descendere monte leonem.* And if some of those animals, which are thus gloriously pursued to death, are not entirely harmless, yet surely they might be easily eradicated by much shorter methods. But it is an inexpressible sin to destroy one of these creatures, except by inches. Thus foxes are to be killed, because they now and then make rather too free with the farmer's yard ; and they are not to be killed, because they afford excellent sport for the neighbouring squire. But a passion for this amusement is attended with many other bad effects. It too frequently engrosses the whole attention of those who are addicted to it. Not to mention that half of the conversation one meets with in the country turns upon

upon dogs and horses, (a circumstance painful enough to minds of a more liberal turn) it takes men off entirely from the proper business of their station; and by throwing them into a perpetual round of dissipation and idleness, renders all kind of application an insupportable burthen to them. All public offices, especially those of mere trouble, descend of course to the lower ranks; to persons naturally the least qualified for the execution of them. The fact with respect to juries, and the care of the poor, is notorious, and has been loudly complained of: to say nothing of offices of a still higher kind. The eternal vexations and quarrels, which these kinds of diversion give rise to, deserve also to be mentioned: not unfrequently between neighbouring gentlemen, but perpetually between farmers, and the retinue of the hunt. I could wish therefore to see a tax upon hunters in the next class to that upon running horses. There is already an indirect tax upon horses used in coaches, &c. But is this laid in the true spirit of equality? And is there no defect in the execution of the law? I venture not to answer these questions. But the daily increase of carriages shews to demonstration, that those especially of the higher kind will bear a still farther imposition of duty. Horses for the road are chiefly either for convenience, or necessity; seldom for pleasure only. A very slight tax therefore should be

be laid here: and those employed in useful labour only exempt¹. I am well aware of the difficulties as well of settling as collecting these several duties. And it is a subject I cannot possibly enter into. I would only observe, that difficulties are not to be confounded with impossibilities. I can conceive but one objection to this arrangement of taxation, as to the matter of it I mean; viz. that the breed of good horses would suffer by it. If the breed of fine, fleet, running horses were to be annihilated, I can see, as I have already said, nothing but good resulting from it. And if the number of hunters were greatly reduced, I see no harm in it. But no such alarming consequences, I doubt, would follow. As long as we have riches, we shall have luxury; and luxury will have its gratifications, whatever they may cost. But I should be rather inclined to think, that a check upon the breed of horses of an higher form would tend to encourage a more strong and serviceable kind². At any rate however the public is sure to be benefited; by a proportionable increase of the means of its subsistence, if the number of useless horses were re-

¹ I mean, if the plan of taxation mentioned in the next article, or any other taxation of horses were to take place. Otherwise, I could wish to have no exemption.

² I am aware, that a mixture of breed is supposed to produce the best horses for service. And I am also satisfied, on the other hand, that there would be no danger of losing our very best blood by a tax upon it.

duced;

duced ; by an increase of the revenue, if it were not. This tax would indeed most probably operate to the public benefit in both ways. I shall apply to this subject a passage from Mr. Rousseau's *Disc. sur l'écon. polit.* conceived in the true spirit of legislation. Il n'appartient qu'au véritable homme d'état, d'élever ses vues dans l'assiette des impôts, plus haut que l'objet des finances ; de transformer des charges onéreuses en d'utiles réglemens de police ; & de faire douter au peuple, si de tels établissemens n'ont pas eu pour fin le bien de la nation, plutôt que la produit des taxes.

The eighth and last scheme which I propose for reducing the number of horses, and at the same time increasing the breed of cattle is of a more extensive nature than any of the former. It is, on the one hand, to impose a tax upon all foals whatever ¹, and, on the other, to give a premium to every calf, and to each score of lambs. These taxes and premiums may be so proportioned, as to be nearly a balance to each other, and so as to take nothing out of the breeder's pockets upon the whole. And if there be any exceeding either

¹ If no other tax be laid upon horses, a distinction should, if possible, be made between the different kinds of foals. This indeed would be attended with almost insurmountable difficulties. A particular tax therefore upon running horses, hunters, &c. as mentioned in the last article, would be perfectly consistent with this general tax upon foals : and the whole would be according to the true law of equality.

way it should be, I think, in this case, rather on the side of the premium: as one would wish to avoid every the least appearance of an intention to raise money by this scheme. It may perhaps be thought better, to give the premium to cattle and sheep in actual rearing, rather than to calves and lambs; the premium to be paid suppose at a year old. This would most probably answer our purpose more effectually: and a larger reward might be afforded them at this age from the proposed fund. It may likewise be thought proper to give rather an higher premium to sheep than to horned cattle, on account of the present high price of wool. Nor would I have this done in a cold, negligent way; and as if at the bottom we were not in earnest to bring about any material alteration. The necessity of the case requires vigorous and operative measures. I am therefore for making a bold push at once; and would try at least to do something with effect. I would have a tax upon the foal of not less than twenty shillings, and the same premium for every head of horned cattle at a year old, and forty shillings for every score of sheep at the same age. These sums might after a short trial be easily reduced, if it were found that we had overshot the mark. All these particular arrangements may be easily adjusted, and will follow of course, if the plan itself stands upon a good foundation; if its principles are allowed to be just,

and its object important and beneficial. I may be, doubtless, too sanguine in my expectations. But I should expect the best effect from these measures. Taxes and premiums of this kind, especially the latter, would operate amazingly upon men; even beyond their real value. What has been the effect of a like regulation with regard to corn? Though the bounty in this instance is not paid immediately to the grower. It has been prodigious. Why then should we be afraid of making a similar, though indeed a less dangerous, experiment in another instance? One good effect of such a measure, besides the general object of plenty, strikes me very strongly. The government would have in their hands a full state of the kingdom, both with respect to horses, and cattle; they would constantly see the operation of these measures, and might adjust their regulations accordingly, without danger of being imposed upon by the false representations of the interested. Though a Monarch must unavoidably see things through other men's eyes, an administration should, as much as possible, see every thing with its own.

The execution of this measure might also be settled in a train little liable to exception. It might be done in a way something like the following. The farmer or breeder to be obliged, under a penalty, within a prescribed time in every year, to exhibit to a justice of peace, or

for greater convenience to the minister of a neighbouring parish, an account of his foals and other young stock; to take an oath to the veracity of his account, and upon conviction of fraud or collusion of any kind to incur a severe penalty; the said justice, or other person empowered, to allow and certify the account without fee or reward; the balance to be either paid or received by the collectors of the land tax in the respective parishes; and the several certified accounts to be given in by them to the receiver, and admitted by him. This method appears to be quite unexceptionable; and neither to be attended with expence, nor with any considerable trouble, except to those who are very well paid for it.

I have endeavoured to consider this point in every light and in all its extent, and have been taking the utmost pains to anticipate every objection that can possibly be raised against a scheme of this kind. It will be said, that the price of horses will be enhanced by it. I answer, that the price of beef and mutton, of butter and cheese, of wool and leather, of soap and candles, will be lowered. And who will be affected by the price of horses? In the first place, those gentlemen who keep horses for their pleasure; who do this voluntarily; may lessen their number when they please; and whose complaints, if they do not, are surely to be but little regarded. Not

indeed that I would suppose any gentleman capable of objecting to an advance of a guinea or two upon a horse, if any public good were to arise from it'. Secondly, it would affect those who employ horses in their necessary business; carriers particularly of all kinds, and also farmers. But the former of these would, I doubt not, soon find a method of reimbursing themselves. And though this reimbursement should be drawn in the end from the pockets of the consumer, it would be an inconsiderable circumstance in comparison to the universal good resulting from the cause of it. For the benefit would be extended to every mortal in the society. And an inconvenience to a few, who are either well able to bear it, or have it in their power to repay themselves, ought never to be put into the scale against an universal benefit. With respect to farmers indeed the case is somewhat different. If the tillage of lands were in any considerable degree made more expensive to them, the public must unavoidably suffer in some way or other. But I see not, that this would be the consequence. If the farmer breeds his own horses, he may surely as well breed a few cattle or sheep. He will then be repaid. And what

* It ought to be observed, that if, on the one hand, I raise the price of horses by laying a tax upon the foals, I lower it, on the other hand, by endeavouring to lessen in every possible way the demand for these animals.

reason

reason can possibly be assigned why he should not do this? The same sort of ground is fit for both these kinds of stock. And if he should be farther tempted to build stalls, instead of stables, the business would be done at once.

But I am apprehensive of the loudest cry from another quarter. The profest breeder of horses, and particularly of fine horses, will muster up all his forces against us. He cannot perhaps get rich quite so fast by breeding cattle, as by breeding for the field, or for the King of France. I have only one short answer to all his complaints. If he is not able to pay his rent, but by multiplying a race of animals destructive to the public subsistence, let him get his rent lowered, or quit his bargain.

But here unfortunately we touch upon the landed interest; the most sensible part of the body politic. This interest however has certainly had no reason to complain of late. The value of lands and of their produce has been raised to the present high pitch by our trade and manufactures solely¹. It ought therefore in return to lend every helping hand to these. Our manu-

¹ This is not only true in fact, but it is demonstrable, that it could not be otherwise. The produce of lands is of no value without a demand for it. And this demand can only arise from industry in some other way; that is, from commerce and manufactures.

factures

factures particularly struggle under every burthen. Nor can they possibly exist long, unless some relief be given to the body of the people. And what will the landed interest be after the fall of these?

We may expect also the most violent clamours from all those who are any way concerned in this traffic, whether for the home or foreign markets; who will not see contentedly so considerable a source of profit gradually slipping out of their hands. But these are interests which, I confess, have a very small share of my regard. For though I am well contented, that such intermediate hands should receive their reward of profit, when employed in facilitating a commerce beneficial to the public; yet am I, on the other side, equally satisfied, to see these employments utterly extinguished, where they are not necessary; and more especially when they are supported and paid by a course of trade apparently injurious to the society, and destructive of its most important interests.

It is not however pretended, that this or any measure of the most general utility can be carried into execution without some inconvenience and prejudice to many individuals of the community. The greatest abuses in civil society are accompanied with advantages to particular persons; and generally indeed owe their birth and support to such exclusive advantages. The removal of
them

them therefore must of course be attended with proportionable inconveniencies to some. But an administration, determined in its purposes of public good, will not easily be diverted from this illustrious object. It will be moved neither by representation nor clamour from the quarter of private exclusive interests of any kind: the bane these of civil society, and which sooner or later will infallibly accomplish the ruin of that kingdom, in which they are suffered to gain any ascendant. Subsistence is the first debt which every state owes to its people. And it is alone the foundation of every other resource. It will therefore be the first care of the guardians of the state, to open every possible fountain of plenty within its reach, to watch over it with the most anxious attention, and to remove all obstruction to its free and equal passage through every vein, and to the remotest branches of the community. It will be always the interest of a few, to divert its course, and to turn the stream into their own channel. There will be such men, and such combinations of men in every community. But they will more particularly abound in large commercial kingdoms; where there is at the same time a more extensive range, and a thicker cover for them.

I shall put an end to this second part of our enquiry by observing in a word, what is its real and only object. It is first, to procure the
greatest

greatest possible plenty of the natural and beneficial produce of this country : and in this view to recommend agriculture to all imaginable encouragement, as being the only means of multiplying this produce in all its branches. And it is secondly, to direct the consumption of it to its proper channel : either to the immediate subsistence of the body of the people, or to the maintenance of those animals which are essentially necessary to this end. If there be any thing in these papers capable of a different tendency, I am the first to disavow and reject it.

F I N I S.

